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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

HAS DEMOCRACY DESTABILIZED EAST ASIA?

by

Zachary T. Elkin

June 2016

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Robert J. Weiner
Christopher P. Twomey

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HAS DEMOCRACY DESTABILIZED EAST ASIA?

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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(FAR EAST, SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE PACIFIC)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

Japan and South Korea share many similarities. Both have experienced periods of extraordinary growth, both have advanced market economies, and both have recently experienced the first transition between parties that control its executive branch. In each case, scholars have blamed the new parties for instability.

The Democratic Party of Japan's rule witnessed base issues that exacerbated U.S.-Japan relations, the 3/11 disaster, and the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands, an action that increased tension with China over the disputed territory. In South Korea, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun presided over the "desecuritization" of the North Korean threat, heated anti-American protests, and a near conflict with Tokyo over the disputed Dokdo Islands. These were all tense scenarios for new leaders. But were they tense because of these administrations' policies and actions; that is, do political parties in Tokyo and Seoul actually matter? Or would these outcomes have occurred regardless?

It is the conclusion of this research that the administrations did contribute to the instability within East Asia; however, their impact on regional stability was transitory. Each administration attempted significant policy changes and each had differing degrees of failure because of international and domestic constraints that tended to reinforce the status quo.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	JAPAN	15
A.	EXTERNAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT	17
1.	Balance of Power	18
2.	Allies and Trade Relations	24
3.	Nationalism and Historical Revisionism	29
B.	ANALYSIS	31
1.	Yuai Policy	33
2.	Territorial Disputes	36
3.	U.S. Alliance	40
4.	Security Policy and JSDF Modernization.....	44
C.	CONCLUSION	45
III.	KOREA	47
A.	EXTERNAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT.....	48
1.	Balance of Power	48
2.	Allies and Trade Relations	53
3.	Nationalism and Identity Politics	56
B.	ANALYSIS	61
1.	China's Rise	63
2.	U.S.-ROK Alliance	65
3.	North Korea.....	67
4.	Japan	72
C.	CONCLUSION	76
IV.	FINDINGS.....	79
A.	WHERE DID NEW ADMINISTRATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?.....	79
1.	Democratization of Security Policy	79
2.	Greater Foreign Policy Autonomy	82
B.	WHY WERE NEW ADMINISTRATIONS CONSTRAINED?.....	83
1.	Inexperience and Lack of Information	84
2.	Divergence of Domestic and International Objectives and Preferences.....	85
C.	FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY	86
1.	Taiwan as a Promising Case Study	86

2.	Democratic Consolidation?	88
LIST OF REFERENCES.....		91
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST		103

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Japan Stability Analysis.....	31
Figure 2.	South Korea Stability Analysis.....	62

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Japan Military Spending	20
Table 2.	South Korean Military Spending	50
Table 3.	South Korean Militarized Interstate Disputes.....	52

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADIZ	Air Defense Identification Zone
AFC	Asian financial crisis
CC	conservative coalition
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CLCS	Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CSR	cross-Straits relations
DMZ	demilitarized zone
DPJ	Democratic Party of Japan
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
ECS	East China Sea
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
FTA	free trade agreement
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	Grand National Party
GOJ	Government of Japan
IGO	intergovernmental organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	international relations
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JCG	Japanese Coast Guard
JMSDF	Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force
JSDF	Japanese Self Defense Force
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
KDJ	Kim Dae-jung
KMT	Kuomintang
KYS	Kim Young-sam
LC	liberal coalition
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LMB	Lee Myeung-bak

MDP	Millennium Democratic Party
MID	militarized interstate dispute
MILEX	military expenditures
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
PGH	Park Geun-hye
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMH	Roh Moo-hyun
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
ROKN	Republic of Korea Navy
RTW	Roh Tae-Woo
SCAP	Supreme Commander of Allied Powers
SDF	self-defense forces
SIPRI	Stockholm international Peace Research Institute
SCS	South China Sea
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
URI	Uri Party
WTO	World Trade Organization

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I. INTRODUCTION

Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have many similarities. Each is a democracy, all share strong ties with the United States (U.S.), and each country has seen the first change of democratically elected party control of its government within the last two decades. One other distinction they share is that this political transition at home occurred in the context of a rise in regional tension.

Each country voted the new parties into power with the hope of change; however, is that what these parties provided? What part, if any, did each of the new administrations play in causing regional tension? This thesis pursues questions mainly with regard to Japan and South Korea, with Taiwan as an additional illustrative comparison case.

In Japan, under the Yukio Hatoyama administration, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) created major alliance problems between Japan and the United States over a base move within the Okinawa prefecture and the cancellation of an Indian Ocean refueling mission. The administration of Hatoyama's DPJ successor, Naoto Kan, nationalized the Senkaku Islands; this action not only derailed Hatoyama's *Yuai* policy, but also resulted in a tense escalation of fighter sorties and ship harassment that raised the probability of armed conflict between the two sides.¹

In South Korea, progressive president Kim Dae-Jung's (KDJ's) administration ushered in a rise of anti-American sentiment, blaming U.S. policy against North Korea (DPRK) for diminishing progress under the Sunshine Policy. U.S. President George W. Bush "Scorned the 'Sunshine' or engagement policy of South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung, and expressed skepticism about North Korea's supposedly peaceful intentions."² Then Kim's progressive successor, Roh Moo-Hyun (RMH), ran for

¹ Tomohiko Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus: The Japanese State of Mind," *Brookings* 63 (2012), https://cle.nps.edu/access/content/group/d588bacc-5ca7-4b5a-a203-6a2715cf87da/readings/taniguchi%202012%20Ishihara%20and%20the%20Senkakus_%20The%20Japanese%20State%20of%20Mind%20_%20Brookings%20Institution.pdf.

² Victor D. Cha, "Korea's Place in the Axis," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (2002): 79, JSTOR: 2003 3164.

president in 2002–2003, fueling overtly anti-American nationalist sentiment.³ As President Kim was finally warming to America, President Roh was elected and led South Korea to new heights of anti-Americanism.⁴ As a result, Korean relations with the United States reached their lowest point while relations with the DPRK improved in the short term.⁵

In Taiwan, Chen Shui-Bian became the first former-opposition, non-Kuomintang (KMT) president in 2000. His popular support stemmed from the independence movement, which consequently made him unpopular with the People's Republic of China (PRC). During the Chen administration, cross-Straits relations (CSR) fell to their lowest point in decades. "Washington and Beijing began to 'co-manage' Taiwan."⁶ Eventually, the PRC passed an anti-secession law, which states that any attempt to declare independence would result in PRC opposition by all means necessary, to include force.⁷

Instability did occur in each case. Japan and China became more confrontational, especially regarding the Senkaku Islands. The Republic of Korea (ROK) became increasingly anti-American, especially through RMH's Uri Party. Taiwan's CSR during Chen Shui-bian's administration deteriorated to a level comparable to those under prior president Lee Teng-hui, although without reliving another 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis.

While these former-opposition governments appear to have presided over a significant amount of change, the actual degree of change and the extent to which that change can be attributed to the political parties themselves is less clear. KDJ's overtures to North Korea were confounded by the Bush administration's heavy-handed approach to the DPRK, by Kim Jong-Il's political maneuvering to drive a wedge between the United

³ Victor D. Cha, "America and South Korea: The Ambivalent Alliance?," *Current History* 102, no. 665 (September 2003): 279–84.

⁴ Katherine H. S. Moon, "Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism and Democratic Consolidation," in *Korea's Democratization*, ed. Samuel S. Kim (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 130–55.

⁵ Cha, "America and South Korea: The Ambivalent Alliance?," 281.

⁶ Shelley Rigger, "Taiwan in U.S.-China Relations," in *Tangled Titans: The United States and China*, ed. David Shambaugh (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2013), 302.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 301.

States and the ROK, and by domestic political challenges that would eventually see KDJ prosecuted for corruption and RMH impeached. Kim and Roh made changes by channeling popular support for their actions to counter political opposition, which consequently put them in a hostile relationship with the United States; a tough position to be in with the nation's security guarantor. Hatoyama bypassed and marginalized Japan's strong bureaucracy to effect changes that might not have been possible otherwise, but it also distanced him from the collective wisdom of the bureaucratic institutions, which were predisposed to see him fail. The DPJ's inexperience and dismissal of bureaucratic experts resulted in mistakes upon which the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) easily capitalized. Chen Shui-bian's presidency was severely constrained by the Legislative Yuan, China, and the United States, but he moved forward with corruption reform, attempts to increase Taiwan's international space, and American military equipment purchases. In the end, Chen was only marginally effective at best, and perhaps, counterproductive and dangerous in reality.

When new and less-experienced political parties take power in East Asia, they do have the ability to make a difference, but three major constraints can be observed: (1) inexperienced leadership and strong opposition prevents enactment of the ruling party's agenda, which tends to be overly ambitious, (2) international and domestic constraints, such as prevailing ideas that provide unforeseen impediments to new parties in power, and (3) the instability evidenced by new party changes has the potential to become routinized as institutions learn to accommodate pluralistic policy views, new parties gain insights into governing that moderate their message, and regional actors learn that democratic politics may not necessarily favor its strategic interests, but rather, may increase the legitimacy of domestic decision making in the democratic countries in the long run.

Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), as it heads to its second term in office, seems to provide an important caveat. Although newly elected DPP president Tsai Ing-wen has successfully moderated her party's views and claimed the presidency, the PRC views the DPP as hostile to PRC interests regardless of its stated position. Taiwan's ambiguous state/sub-state position, coupled with the diverging interests of the PRC and

Taiwan, appear to place the two on a collision course. The underlying shifting identity within the Taiwan populace, and not any specific president or administration, appears to be the driving force of this instability.

Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan each have been the subject of numerous articles and books. An attempt follows to review the most pertinent works relating to the countries and areas that this thesis covers. Relevant theoretical frameworks for regional stability analyses are presented first, and then actual comparative analyses are reviewed. While multiple comparative studies integrate the three countries, the few that also tie in their democratic institutions and regional stability are reviewed. Finally, this review addresses whether the parties actually matter.

The concept of “regional stability” does not provide a rigid scale with which to measure variations. Robert Ayson states, “Stability, like peace, is a desired goal, but countries differ on what constitutes stability.”⁸ This study defines stability as the region’s “tendency toward equilibrium, including its ability to find a new equilibrium in changing conditions,” including “the avoidance of major war, the stability of distribution of power, the stability of institutions and norms, [and] political stability within countries.”⁹

The Asia-Pacific region is the “system” for which this study attempts stability analysis, but the interrelationship of each country within the Asia-Pacific region is outside the scope of this work. For example, while domestic political dynamics within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) might impact Japan’s security environment, this study only needs to determine that the source of stability is external to Japan. This analysis includes the influence that the United States exerts on the region.

Determining structural changes within the regional balance of power may prompt an equilibrium shift. The rise of China, with its expansive military modernization and economic expansion, appears to require other regional actors to find a new equilibrium. This thesis compares economic and military data between regional powers to determine if

⁸ Robert Ayson, “Regional Stability in the Asia Pacific: Toward a Conceptual Understanding,” *Asian Security* 1, no. 2 (2005): 190–213, doi: 10.1080/14799850490961080.

⁹ Ayson, “Regional Stability in Asia Pacific,” 192.

changes in the balance of power have occurred vis-à-vis other regional actors. Demographically, it entails comparing population trends. Given the prominence of contested islands within regional disputes, the likelihood that conflicts would involve a significant maritime components, and current concerns about anti-access technologies within East Asia, this paper expands upon the metrics traditionally used by offensive realists.¹⁰ While the defense budget is included, paramilitary activity must also be considered because of the proliferation of white-hull fleets and the unorthodox behavior of those vessels within the past decade. For example, U.S. carrier forces have continued decrease relatively over recent years, as China has launched its first carrier, and started a program to create future indigenous carriers. Another U.S. intervention in cross-Strait tensions, like that of 1996 via two carrier strike groups, may be a riskier prospect in the future. The United States still has a significant maritime advantage vis-à-vis the PRC, but China's development of technology, such as the DF-21D missile, could "prepare" China "for a foreign enemy's military intervention" in future "anti-secessionist" conflicts with Taiwan.¹¹ Eight years of DPP rule in Taiwan and 10 years of liberal coalition (LC) rule in Korea allow enough of a period to discern a pattern, but the DPJ was only in power in Japan for three years. This weakness in explanatory power means that Chapter II relies more on a detailed analysis of policy prescriptions and changes in defense policies to ascertain whether they made a difference.

Balance of power calculations provides a foundation for understanding security dynamics, but does not explain the entirety of the security environment. Mearsheimer concludes that China's rise will inevitably lead to conflict; in this view, elected governments in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, regardless of party, would make similar decisions when faced with external threats. The inevitability of conflict results from China's rise and America's attempt to contain it, along with a balancing coalition of "India, Japan, and Russia, as well as smaller powers like Singapore, South Korea, and

¹⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, updated (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2003).

¹¹ M. Taylor Fravel and Christopher P. Twomey, "Projecting Strategy: The Myth of Chinese Counter-Intervention," *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2014): 171–87, doi:10.1080/0163660X.2014.1002164.

Vietnam.”¹² While this claim seems sensational, is a comparable NATO type institution starting to form in East Asia? Lanteigne makes the case that soft balancing is occurring within Asia, which would look more like bilateral and multilateral cooperation in light of China’s rise.¹³

The amount and quality of institutions and alliance affiliations that countries share matter deeply in the decisions they will make regarding war. An alliance between two states makes a military dispute “40% less likely,” while being a player in the global decision-making process may constrain a country from going to war due to the potential of being ostracized by the international community.¹⁴ As institutional membership and alliances matter in regional stability, this thesis analyzes the nature of alliance relations to determine whether a country’s foreign policy decisions stabilized or destabilized the region.

Democratization, democratic consolidation, and domestic politics are all phenomena that can produce uncontrollable forces; moreover, the impact of the resultant forces can lead to new (and sometimes unwanted) foreign policy conditions. Mansfield and Snyder note that instability, independent of either political party, tends to be associated with the rise of nationalism during democratization.¹⁵ Different from general political infighting within democratic countries, it reflects the more generic shift toward allowing new groups to compete for power, which heightens nationalism and significantly increases the potential for conflicts with outside countries.¹⁶ Since Taiwan and South Korea had only been a democracy for two election cycles prior to the opposition party’s coming to power, the effects of new democratization and fear of

¹² John J. Mearsheimer, “China’s Unpeaceful Rise,” *Current History* 105, no. 690 (April 2006): 160–62, ProQuest: 200776171.

¹³ Marc Lanteigne, “Water Dragon? China, Power Shifts and Soft Balancing in the South Pacific,” *Political Science* 64, no. 1 (June 2012): 36, doi: 10.1177/0032318712447732.

¹⁴ Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001).

¹⁵ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 5–38, JSTOR: 2539213.

¹⁶ Ibid.

backsliding back into authoritarianism were still a concern. Japan's democracy, by contrast, can be seen as very stable and longstanding, since the LDP has competed and won in regular elections for over 60 years.

One question of importance to scholars of democratization is whether Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan were democratically consolidated in the first place at the time former-opposition parties gained power.¹⁷ A country can, as Japan did, have an apparently vibrant democracy for decades without meeting the full consolidation criteria. Once properly consolidated, issues pertaining to governance, instead of patronage and nationalism, predominate the political agenda, but some scholars believe that for complete consolidation, a functioning two-party system must exist.¹⁸ Some scholars, such as Cho, have found reason to believe that the democratic peace theory does not apply to countries that have not yet fully consolidated.¹⁹ His concern is relevant to the current thesis to the extent that any regional instability might be caused by a country's incomplete democratic consolidation, a condition mostly independent of the particular party in power.

Even if considering that a country is fully consolidated democracy, gridlock and opposition may still significantly constrain the ruling party's ability to govern in an effective manner. If politics can constrain the amount of change a party can make, Japan should provide a rich example due to its ministerial government style and its reliance on coalition maintenance to govern. South Korea and Taiwan have presidential democracies, but government inaction is still possible given the possibility of a divided government between legislative and executive branches, alongside the potential that bureaucratic inertia can stifle a new administration's initiatives.

¹⁷ Il Hyun Cho, "Democratic Instability: Democratic Consolidation, National Identity and Security Dynamics," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8 (2011): 191–213, doi:10.1111/j.1743-8594.2011.00154.

¹⁸ Cho, "Democratic Instability," 196.

¹⁹ Cho, "Democratic Instability," 209.

Ideas of threat and security are said to be socially constructed. How a country views anarchy, not anarchy itself, shapes its relations toward other countries.²⁰ To determine party change and whether the ideas it generated were a determining factor in changes to regional stability, this paper traces sources of interstate tension between major regional actors to determine whether the new party played a role in promoting or endorsing destructive ideas for political gain. One major trend that has become troublesome in East Asia is rising nationalism among the many neighboring countries. At first glance, opposition parties in South Korea and Taiwan have either supported or pursued ideas and policies that eroded regional stability in this regard, while Japan's traditional opposition party has opposed the strong nationalist thread that has stirred up discontent among its neighbors in recent years. This work seeks to incorporate ideas into its analysis mainly because anti-Japanese sentiment puts South Korea and Japan on an unnecessarily hostile trajectory while Taiwan's increasingly felt Taiwanese identity has put it on a collision course with China.

The author now turns to the major literature regarding Japan in particular. Hughes observes that the DPJ's failure to implement its "new grand strategy" was due to the amount of pressure exerted by the international system, specifically China and the United States.²¹ Also, the lack of experience and domestic political issues helped to block progress on the DPJ's attempt to become more regionally accepted. Sneider explains that U.S. alliance pressures posed significant domestic issues for Hatoyama and that his promotion of "Asianism" was misunderstood by U.S. policy makers.²² Each of these works focuses on different institutional characteristics that boxed in Japanese decision makers. While Sneider tends to give the DPJ more benefit of the doubt, Hughes blames the Hatoyama administration for the lack of experience and failure to govern

²⁰ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425, JSTOR: 2706858.

²¹ Christopher W. Hughes, "The Democratic Party of Japan's New (but Failing) Grand Security Strategy: From 'Reluctant Realist' to 'Resentful Realist'?", *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012): 109–40, doi:10.1352/jjs.2012.0006.

²² Daniel Sneider, "The New Asianism: Japanese Foreign Policy under the Democratic Party of Japan," *Asia Policy*, no. 12 (July 2011): 99–129, doi:10.1353/asp.2011.0016.

effectively.²³ Hughes acknowledges the political infighting between the DPJ and Japan's LDP, as well as bureaucratic rigidity, which contributed to souring relations with the United States.²⁴ Pekkanen, Reed, and Scheiner note that the LDP's strong opposition greatly affected the DPJ's ability to govern.²⁵ Together, this literature paints a grim picture of the constraints arrayed against the DPJ administration's attempts to effect change in Japan.

Another set of literature discusses the DPJ's failure to govern during the 3/11 crises and the diplomatic row over nationalization of the Senkaku/Diaoutai Islands.²⁶ While the LDP, which failed to hold nuclear regulators accountable for decades, might not have handled the Fukushima triple disaster any better, Krauss makes an important point about the DPJ Prime Minister Hatoyama's stance on the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. His political jockeying unnecessarily reignited domestic conflict, which is still to be fully resolved.²⁷ Richard Samuels discusses domestic and international considerations that have shaped Japan's politics from the end of WWII until 2006, but does not cover the period that this analysis covers, 2009 to the present.²⁸ The author's analysis attempts to add to Samuels' comprehensive political analysis for the three historic years of DPJ rule and beyond.

In South Korea, the literature notes KDJ's initial effective handling of the Asian financial crisis (AFC), as well as Korea's fall back into predation.²⁹ Political constraints kept KDJ from reforming the developmental state collaboration between the Chaebol and the government bureaucracy that has led to corruption. While not directly related to

²³ Hughes, "The Democratic Party of Japan's New (but Failing) Grand Security Strategy," 109.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Robert Pekkanen, Steven R. Reed, and Ethan Scheiner, eds., "Japanese Politics between the 2009 and 2012 Elections," in *Japan Decides 2012* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 8–19.

²⁶ Ellis Krauss, "Crisis Management, LDP, and DPJ Style," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 2 (2013): 177–99, doi:10.1017/S1468109913000029; Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus."

²⁷ Krauss, "Crisis Management," 193–4

²⁸ Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan: Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

²⁹ Dwight H. Perkins, *East Asian Development: Foundations and Strategies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

security, it highlights the potential that Kim had to make a difference. Moon and Suh write that Kim's policies of thawing South Korea's relationship with Japan were constrained by three factors: collective Korean identity that stems from "historic memory of colonial domination," nationalist abuse of history in both Japan and South Korea, and in the opposite direction, the U.S.' support for South Korea and Japan's cooperation.³⁰ Moon and Suh focus on some of Kim administration's positive accomplishments and the ideational and international constraints that affected Kim's ability to make progress on democratic reforms or dismantling the developmental state; however, they focus only on one administration, not party change, in assessing the contribution of changes in government control to regional stability. Katherine Moon argues that nationalism and the anti-Americanism in Korea is part of the consolidation process of foreign policy within democratic principles, and it is natural and healthy for consolidating democracies.³¹ Both KDJ and RMH featured anti-American sentiment in their administration and presidential campaign, respectively, but Roh began to backpedal on anti-American sentiment after he was elected.³² Both the Cha and Moon analyses are useful for understanding ideological motivations that fueled RMH's increasingly nationalistic campaign, but neither study focuses on the question of whether KDJ's or RMH's presidencies made a difference. In contrast, Zhu notes that President Roh's "peace and prosperity policy" was vital in balancing South Korea's alliance with the United States with its ability to help stabilize Northeast Asia.³³ Haggard and Nolan determine that, although Roh's peace and prosperity plan sounded productive, he had very little good will among his neighbors to achieve any of his lofty goals; for example, the U.S.-South Korea free trade agreement (FTA) was being discussed as Koreans took to the streets to protest American beef.³⁴

³⁰ Chung-in Moon and Seung-won Suh, "Security, Economy, and Identity Politics: Japan-South Korean Relations under the Kim Dae-Jung Government," *Korean Observer* 36, no. 4 (2005): 595, ProQuest 209360696.

³¹ Moon, "Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism and Democratic Consolidation."

³² Zhu Zhiqun, "Small Power, Big Ambition: South Korea's Role in Northeast Asian Security under President Roh Moo-Hyun," *Asian Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2007): 67–86, JSTOR: 30172663.

³³ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁴ Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "A Security and Peace Mechanism for Northeast Asia: The Economic Dimension," *The Pacific Review* 22, no. 2 (2009): 119–37, doi:10.1080/09512740902815284.

This study further assesses whether progressive presidents Kim and Roh actually made an appreciable difference.

Taiwan, which is isolated from many international organizations and treaty alliances because of its peculiar status vis-à-vis China, is considered by the PRC to be a domestic issue, but is still accorded assurances that the Taiwan issue will be settled peacefully under the Taiwan Relations Act and the three joint communiques. Rigger notes that “Chen undertook a series of initiatives aimed at raising Taiwan’s international status: promoting a new constitution, pressing for referendums on issues related to Taiwan’s sovereignty, filing an application for United Nations membership for ‘Taiwan.’”³⁵ It is clear that Chen Shui-bian’s administration attempted unilaterally to change Taiwan’s international profile in an attempt to acquire more of the trappings of other independent countries. Furthermore, division within the government proved to be a problem for Chen. As Rigger notes, “For seven years, the KMT-dominated Legislative Yuan refused to appropriate funds to purchase most of what the United States was willing to sell.”³⁶ This division had the effect of further deteriorating the U.S.-Taiwan relationship. Yet, deteriorating relations may not have clearly been caused by Chen Shui-bian’s actions. Although Chen pushed for referenda and other measures that attempted unilaterally to change the status quo to provide Taiwan more international recognition, his initial tone toward China was not nearly as radical. Taiwan’s new DPP party leader and president, Tsai Ing-wen, has also moderated the party’s stance on independence. Independence is still a contentious part of the party plank, but it has not been a part of her political message.³⁷ Certain other pressures, such as domestic PRC concerns and relative balance of power change between China and the United States, might also factor into the interactions amongst the United States, China, and Taiwan from 2000–2008.

Finally, each chapter of this thesis reviews whether the former, opposition party administrations, as opposed to other phenomena, ultimately have any effect on regional

³⁵ Rigger, “Taiwan in U.S.-China Relations,” 301.

³⁶ Ibid., 302.

³⁷ “DPP Selects Tsai as Presidential Candidate,” April 16, 2015, <http://taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=229411&ctNode=420#>.

stability. Cho provides intriguing findings about each country's nationalist outbidding politics and democratic institutional structures.³⁸ His work holds that a major caveat to the democratic peace theory is consolidation,³⁹ and it furthers Mansfield and Snyder's research on how democratization might lead to aggressive foreign policies and potential for war.⁴⁰ While addressing some potential political constraints, Cho's article argues that the lack of democratic consolidation and the "political salience" of negative nationalism resulted in nationalistic outbidding.⁴¹ As a consequence of its focus on democratic consolidation and the influence of ideas, the article does not attempt to address what difference, if any, a new political party can make in bringing stability to the region. That topic, however, is the intent of this thesis.

In light of initial political party changes within Japan and South Korea, as well as Taiwan, this thesis analyzes how and whether changes to long-standing political control among East Asian democracies can affect regional stability within the Asia-Pacific. By focusing on phenomena that have traditionally led to conflict or tension in the region—balance of power changes, alliance troubles, and ideas like nationalism and identity—the succeeding chapters narrow down ways that each country's new administration might have contributed to instability. Typically, a confluence of multiple factors governs instability interdependently, but this thesis tries to distinguish between the effects of external factors, the actual policies and actions of the president or prime minister, and other domestic factors. This thesis finds that new administrations in Japan, and Korea, did negatively impact regional stability in certain ways, but that this instability seemed to be transient at best. It also finds that new administrations are significantly constrained from implementing changes due to a confluence of international and domestic forces that tend to reinforce the status quo.

³⁸ Cho, "Democratic Instability," 208-9.

³⁹ Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*.

⁴⁰ Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," 5-38.

⁴¹ Cho, "Democratic Instability," 191.

These findings are important because the United States has rebalanced to the Pacific to protect its national interests, address concerns from allies about the rise of China, and ensure that the conflictual nature of the East China Sea (ECS) and South China Sea (SCS) disputes do not escalate into violence. The countries studied in this thesis have very close relationships with the United States. South Korea and Japan are both strong regional allies. Taiwan does not share a formal alliance with the United States, but benefits from military sales and an ambiguous security commitment that appears to guarantee that the cross-Straits dispute will be settled peacefully to some. If domestic politics in these countries destabilize the region, the United States could find itself entangled in a regional conflict.

This study also tries to understand whether something is uniquely destabilizing about these East Asian cases. Multiple scholars have pointed out that countries in Asia seem not to follow the democratic peace theory as closely as other regions do, and by looking closer at Japan and South Korea, this thesis attempts to unpack these claims while providing an explanatory framework to put different sources of instability into perspective. Besides providing a new lens from which to judge whether domestic phenomena will affect international relations (IR) among a region's many dynamic actors, it is the author's hope that this work clarifies some of the challenges facing stability in the Asia-Pacific region and what should be expected during future iterations of administration in democracies in that region.

Two main chapters, beside the introduction and conclusion, focus on Japan and South Korea. Each contains a section on how and whether instability within the regional security environment corresponded to periods of opposing party rule. These initial sections for each country are subdivided into three functional areas: changes to regional balance of power, changes in alliances, and ideological currents that impact stability. The second section of each chapter analyzes each area in which the first section found areas of instability and filters the sources of this instability into three causal areas: international constraints or sources of friction, policies and actions solely attributable to the administration, and other domestic constraints and sources of friction.

This thesis focuses on historical accounts, using mostly secondary sources. Minor data sets are used to analyze military spending numbers and economic indicators. Furthermore, polling data from primary and secondary sources, when it appeared to be trustworthy, was used to measure change in ideas, such as nationalism or identity.

This thesis measures the effects on regional stability through two components, severity and persistence. While a significant event, such as an invasion of another country, is extremely severe, it may or may not be a persistent source of instability, depending on whether occupation occurs and whether hostilities diminish or persist afterward. On the other hand, historical contestation over an uninhabited rock can rise to a level of dispute that poisons diplomatic relations between countries for decades, but does not result in military conflict, which would constitute persistent but not severe instability. The measurements of the first section consider the persistence and severity of the phenomena that affect regional stability to provide an overall measurement of stability.

II. JAPAN

Japan has had a single dominant party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), rule the country almost without interruption through six decades of peace and prosperity. Within the past 10 years, a true opposition party, The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), has not only materialized, but for the first time also won control of the Diet and appointed a prime minister with no coalition support from the LDP. During the DPJ's three years of rule from 2009 to 2012, three prime ministers, Hatoyama Yukio, Kan Naoto, and Noda Yoshihiko attempted to make large changes that appeared to destabilize the region in a number of key ways. This chapter focuses on those years of 2009 through 2012 to determine whether or not the DPJ destabilized the region, or whether it made a difference at all.

The first section introduces the regional trends in play and how they affect Japan. These macro-level trends include balance of power considerations that affect long-term regional stability, alliance maintenance with regional actors, and identity shifts that affect Japan's image abroad. Each subsection helps to determine the overall instability that Japan's interaction with the regional system has produced.

The second section attributes the instability to external pressures, internal political pressures other than those driven by the DPJ, or to the policies that the DPJ itself implemented (or failed to implement). The section further is divided into four subsections: regional leadership, history issues, territorial disputes, and base issues. The regional leadership subsection analyzes Japan's attempts to instill a sense of regional institutionalization in East Asia to counter China's rise. The history issues subsection discusses whether or not the DPJ was able to overcome Japan's perceived failure to acknowledge historical atrocities it committed during WWII. The territorial disputes section addresses how Japan has attempted to deal with islands over which it disputes sovereignty with China, Taiwan, and Korea. Finally, base issues are a significant strain to U.S.-Japanese relations and have the potential to morph into a regional issue.

Many scholars have warned that democratization, incomplete consolidation, and other transitional phenomena related to democracies can lead to instability or conflict.⁴² Japan's initial attempt to democratize was the Taisho Democracy of the WWI era.⁴³ This experiment did not last, as the Japanese Imperial Army assassinated politicians who got in its way, with the military eventually taking over the prime minister's position.⁴⁴ After Japan's defeat in WWII, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) implemented the post-war constitution, which has persisted unchanged since. But even as the Japanese government hosted free and fair elections, the LDP's conservative predecessors, and then the LDP itself since 1955, have maintained a monopoly on power.⁴⁵ In the 1990s, the bubble burst, and Japan's economy experienced what some have called the lost decades.⁴⁶ The LDP's failure to shore up a spiraling economy while also dealing with political scandals resulted in party fragmentation and its first loss of power. The first instance of LDP defeat occurred from 1993–1994, when a coalition of eight parties, led by Hosokawa Morihiro, ruled for less than a year before the coalition disintegrated.⁴⁷ This study does not include this period for two reasons. First, the parties in power were not in power long enough to provide useful data on regional stability. Second, the Hosokawa government's main policy effort focused on electoral reform and other internal matters, not security or foreign policy. Directly after Hosokawa's successor, Tsutomu Hata, took office, the coalition's rule was ended through a vote of no

⁴² Mansfield and Snyder, "Democracy and Danger"; Amitav Acharya, "Democracy or Death? Will Democratization Bring Greater Regional Instability to East Asia," *The Pacific Review* 23, no. 3 (2010): 335–58, doi:10.1080/09512748.2010.481052; Cho, "Democratic Instability."

⁴³ Takayoshi Matsuo, "The Development of Democracy in Japan—Taisho Democracy: Its Flowering and Breakdown—," *The Developing Economies* 4, no. 4 (1966): 612–32, doi:10.1111/j.1746-1049.1966.tb00495.x.

⁴⁴ Conrad Shirokauer and Donald N. Clark, *Modern East Asia: A Brief History*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008).

⁴⁵ Gerald L. Curtis, "The Liberal Democratic Party: Perpetuating Dominance," in *The Japanese Way of Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 45–79.

⁴⁶ Perkins, *East Asian Development*, 154–55.

⁴⁷ Gerald L. Curtis, "The Politics of Complacency," in *The Logic of Japanese Politics: Leaders, Institutions, and the Limits of Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 25–64.

confidence.⁴⁸ The LDP then coopted the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) by promising it the position of prime minister if the JSP would help the LDP form a ruling coalition. Thus, Tomiichi Murayama of the JSP became prime minister, but supported by a majority-LDP ruling coalition. The JSP's power sharing agreement with the LDP was unique to domestic politics. It accomplished multiple breakthroughs in regional diplomacy, but citizens had not given majority support to Murayama's party in the way they did to Hatoyama's DPJ. Also, the traditional ruling party, the LDP, was not actively impeding the JSP's attempt to rule. The period that Murayama ruled, 1994–1996, was thus essentially not a non-LDP government. It may deserve study in and of itself, but this study aims to examine the first time that a traditional opposition party was installed by the people. For this reason, it focuses on the period of 2009–2012 to determine whether the non-LDP governments make a difference.

A. EXTERNAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Japan appears to have filled the role of Perfidious Albion of East Asia. Its position of offshore balancer almost mirrors that of Great Britain, including an even greater resentment and hostility toward it by its continental neighbors. Japan's history includes the brutal occupations of Korea, and parts of China during the early 1900s, which continue to haunt relations with its neighbors today.⁴⁹ Although its economic might had increased exponentially from the 1950s through the 1980s, Japan's bubble burst in the 1990s, which resulted in a stultification of growth.⁵⁰ Also, Japan's close relations with America allowed Japan's constrained military to take advantages of the high technology that the West was implementing. The past two decades have greatly diminished Japan's

⁴⁸ J. A. A. Stockwin, "To Oppose or to Appease? Parties out of Power and the Need for Real Politics in Japan," *Japan Forum* 18, no. 1 (2006): 115–32, doi:10.1080/09555800500498459.

⁴⁹ Thomas U. Berger, "The Politics of Memory in Japanese Foreign Relations," in *Japan's International Politics: The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*, ed. Mike Berger, M. Mochizuki, and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 179–211; Takashi Yoshida, "Revising the Past, Complicating the Future: The Yushukan War Museum in Modern Japanese History," accessed January 27, 2016, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/yoshida.pdf>; Ji Young Kim, "Escaping the Vicious Cycle: Symbolic Politics and History Disputes between South Korea and Japan," *Asian Perspective* 38, no. 1 (2014): 31–60.

⁵⁰ Perkins, *East Asian Development*, 154.

economic and military lead over traditional adversaries like China and have allowed Korea to close the gap slightly. This situation matters inasmuch as the three countries still maintain disputes over islands stemming from an incomplete understanding of the Potsdam Agreement and Treaty of San Francisco that ended WWII and repatriated land back to countries that Japan had historically conquered in the 20th century.⁵¹ As the past two decades have seen absolute increases in military spending, Japan's 1% defense spending cap has not hobbled its ability to expand the Japanese Self Defense Force's (JSDF's) capabilities. While the PRC has surpassed Japan in the quantity of most military units, including ships, aircraft, and armored divisions, the quality of Japan's military surpasses most regional powers with little exception. If the JSDF is lacking in any area, it would be its level of tactical experience.

1. Balance of Power

Japan's constrained military is a difficult factor in a stressful geostrategic environment in which it actively disputes territory with Russia, Korea, and China while concerned about North Korean nuclear provocation and random acts of aggression. Its security gap had been filled by subsidizing the American military presence, but it continues to worry both about being either abandoned by Washington during its time of need or being entangled in America's various adventures around the world, such as Koizumi's deployment of self-defense forces (SDF) forces into Iraq.⁵²

South Korea is half the size of Japan based on population, spends approximately half as much as Japan on its military, and continues to maintain an economic gap with Tokyo regarding its latent power capabilities. Both countries are manufacturing powerhouses with a penchant for high technology and innovation, and both have purchased some of the most technologically advanced weapon systems from the United States to bolster their defense posture. While potential exists for the two nations to work

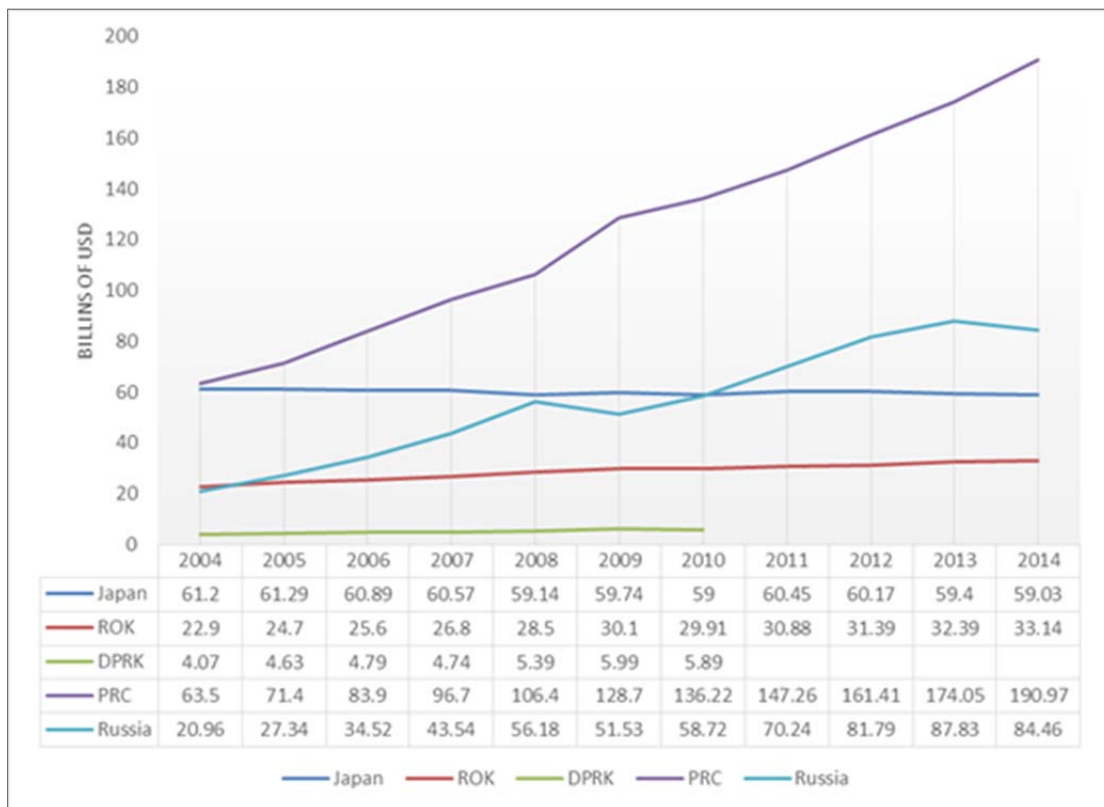
⁵¹ M. Erika Pollmann, "The Politicization of the Liancourt Rocks Dispute and Its Effect on the Japan-South Korea Relationship," *Issues and Insights* 15, no. 10 (October 2015), http://csis.org/files/publication/issuesinsights_vol15no10.pdf.

⁵² Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 74–85.

together on issues like ballistic missile defense, they also have an interesting chance to be locked into conflict regarding the Takeshima/Dokdo Islands.⁵³ In 2005, Japan's Shimane prefecture established "Takeshima Day" to celebrate annexation. This move increased the tension between Japan and Korea and led to a "near miss" in 2006 when South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun (RMH) dispatched 20 Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) ships to seize two Japanese Coast Guard survey vessels. As shown in Table 1, Korea spent roughly one-third as much as Japan on its defense in 2004, but Japan's almost steady levels of spending for over a decade, coupled with ROK increases, have resulted in a narrower but still-significant divide in military spending: one-half in 2014. Investment in submarines and other maritime equipment can be seen as presenting a problem for Tokyo over reaching a settlement on the disputed islets.

⁵³ Paul Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance," in *Changing Power Relations in Northeast Asia*, ed. Marie Soderberg, East Asian Economics and Business Series (London: Routledge, 2011).

Table 1. Japan Military Spending⁵⁴



China surpassed Japan in military spending in 2003 and has increased its spending threefold over the last decade.⁵⁵ While Japan and China are economically intertwined, they remain locked in a bitter dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. China's military modernization has exacerbated the problem by setting a shipbuilding pace that Japan could not afford to match even if it chose to do so. To maintain a semblance of parity between the two, Japan has used its white-hulled Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) to police the Senkaku Islands. This move is important, because it may appear to be a de-escalatory measure, but it might represent more of a budgetary necessity than a confidence-building measure. The Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF), like the rest of Japan's

⁵⁴ Adapted from "SIPRI Military Expenditures Database," 2015, http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database; Bureau of Verification and Compliance, *2012 World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, n.d.), accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/2005/180131.htm>.

⁵⁵ "SIPRI Military Expenditures Database," 2015, http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database.

de facto military, is limited in the Diet by a 1% spending cap. To circumvent this cap, the Kantei, or Office of the Prime Minister, has started funding national security programs outside the defense budget.⁵⁶ For example, Japan's cost incurred for basing U.S. forces in Japan is considered outside of the defense budget. Also, the JCG is considered separate, and, therefore, a significant increase in JCG ships has augmented the traditional gray-hulled JMSDF ships.⁵⁷ This measure has been reciprocated by China's paramilitary sea service, the Chinese Coast Guard, in recent years, and China has surpassed all other countries combined in the number of ships in its Navy and Coast Guard.⁵⁸

Another method that Japan has attempted to manage the risk of China's rise is to hug the United States close and reach out to other like-minded states throughout East Asia. In the previous decade, Japan has successfully strengthened relations with India, Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and a host of other countries.⁵⁹ Recently, by providing military assistance and conducting presence operations in the South China Sea, Japan has disbursed its resources around the East and South China Seas to divide China's resources while attempting to address differences with Beijing in a constructive manner.⁶⁰

North Korea provides a real but somewhat inflated risk to Japan.⁶¹ While the LDP magnify the risk of DPRK nuclear attack, Japan currently possesses redundancy for

⁵⁶ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 169.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Department of Defense, *The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy: Achieving U.S. National Security Objectives in a Changing Environment* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2015), http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_Security_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF.

⁵⁹ Swee Lean Collin Koh, "Japan and the 'Maritime Pivot' to Southeast Asia," *The Diplomat*, December 14, 2015, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/japan-and-the-maritime-pivot-to-southeast-asia/>.

⁶⁰ Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, "Insight—Testing Beijing, Japan Eyes Growing Role in South China Sea Security," *Reuters*, March 11, 2015, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/03/11/uk-japan-southchinasea-insight-idUKKBN0M62BN20150311>; Yoichiro Sato, "Japan Aid to the Philippines a Warning to China," *East Asia Forum*, August 29, 2013, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2013/08/29/japan-aid-to-the-philippines-a-warning-to-china/>; Tim Kelly and Nobuhiro Kubo, "Exclusive: Japan's Far-Flung Island Defense Plan Seeks to Turn the Tables on China," *Reuters*, December 18, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-military-china-exclusive-idUSKBN0U107220151218>.

⁶¹ Samuels, *Securing Japan*; Hughes, "The Democratic Party of Japan's New (but Failing) Grand Security Strategy."

countering North Korea's inchoate ballistic missile threat. Japan has experienced DPRK small boat attacks and a string of kidnappings that only surfaced when Prime Minister Koizumi met with Kim Jong-Il on September 17, 2002.⁶² Although it would be difficult, if not impossible, for North Korea to project any substantial force ashore against Japan, this threat does not assuage Tokyo's concern over the North's abundant stockpiles of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, its robust asymmetric forces, and cyber capabilities that pose a risk to Japan's security.

Japan and Russia have never signed a peace treaty formally ending WWII, but this does not translate into the ill will experienced between Japan and North Korea. Generally, Japan has been viewed as an American proxy in the Far East and one of Russia's adversaries during the Cold War. Further back, the Russian Empire's collapse can be partly attributed to the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, in which Japan surprised much of the world by taking on and defeating the Russian juggernaut.⁶³ The two still have unsettled business. The Russian-administered Southern Kurile Islands are still claimed by Japan and referred to within Japan as the Northern Territories.⁶⁴ In 2010, President Medvedev visited the disputed islands and called for its Russian defenses to be increased.⁶⁵

Russia's other concern is that Japan controls two of the three straits going in and out of Russia's only Far East naval base in Vladivostok and can contest the third. The Le Perouse straits, or *Soya Kaikyo* in Japanese, border Russia in the north and Japan in the south. The other two straits, the Tsugaru Straits between Hokkaido and Honshu and Tsushima Straits between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Islands of Tsushima and Honshu, pose a geostrategic concern for Russian defense of its east coast.

⁶² Linus Hagstrom and Ulv Hansson, "The North Korean Abduction Issue: Emotions, Securitisation and the Reconstruction of Japanese Identity from 'Aggressor' to 'Victim' and from 'Pacifist' to 'Normal,'" *The Pacific Review* 28, no. 1 (2015): 71–93, doi:10.1080/09512748.2014.970043.

⁶³ Shirokauer and Clark, *Modern East Asia: A Brief History*, 241–43.

⁶⁴ "Kurile Islands Dispute between Russia and Japan," April 29, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11664434>.

⁶⁵ Paul Midford, "Foreign Policy as an Election Issue," in *Japan Decides 2012*, ed. Robert J. Pekkanen, Steven R. Reed, and Ethan Scheiner (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 185.

Tokyo seems little worried about Russia's increase in military spending even though Russia's defense spending surpassed Japan's in 2004 and continued climbing.⁶⁶ Perhaps one reason that Japan and Russia have openly worked with each other since the end of the Cold War is that they perceive China's rise as a common threat. Another reason that Tokyo has not sounded any alarms over Russia's actions is that Moscow's attention has been focused on the West in recent decades: Georgia, Crimea and the Ukraine, and now Syria.⁶⁷ While Japan has followed the Western sanction regime against Russia for its breach of other countries' sovereignty, Tokyo's interests were not directly at stake. With the exception of the Northern Territories, and Japan's adoption of sanctions against Russia for its aggressions in Europe, a similar pragmatism exists that underpins relations and has benefited both countries economically.

America's security commitment to Japan is based on the Treaty of San Francisco and the United States' role in drafting Japan's war-renouncing Constitution, but as U.S. forces become spread thin throughout the world, Japan grows increasingly concerned about whether its stalwart ally has the wherewithal to stay the course.⁶⁸ In a regional context, America's presence provided security for East Asia's miracle growth.⁶⁹ East Asian countries are sometimes viewed as wanting the benefit of American presence and security assurance without having to contribute, either in military might or in basing agreements. But Japan has disproportionately paid for the quartering of troops in East Asia. One reason this makes sense is that Japan has disproportionately benefited from America's security assurance.

Japan has benefited from the American military presence while quietly subsidizing the bill. Japan's defense spending has remained relatively low, less than 1% of its gross domestic product (GDP) since WWII. While this still translates into

⁶⁶ "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database."

⁶⁷ Philip Breedlove, "Commander U.S. Forces Europe Statement," Testifying before Congress presented at the House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC, February 25, 2015.

⁶⁸ Shirokauer and Clark, *Modern East Asia: A Brief History*; Samuels, *Securing Japan*.

⁶⁹ Richard F. Doner, Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater, "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia," *International Organization* 59, no. 2 (2005): 327–61, JSTOR: 3877907.

Japan constantly landing among the top five to 10 countries in overall defense spending, it is still far less than other countries based on its economic potential.⁷⁰ To compensate for its paucity in “military spending,” Japan spends a considerable amount on the operating costs of American bases. Calder notes that Japan contributed four to five trillion dollars annually for the expenses incurred from hosting approximately 40,000 U.S. personnel within Japan during the late 1990s and early 2000s.⁷¹ All in all, Japan’s relatively light investment has, over the decades, allowed it to invest more domestically.

2. Allies and Trade Relations

In progressing from the mortal enemies to the closest of allies, the U.S. and Japan forged an alliance post-WWII that has served both countries’ interests since. After WWII, and the end of the U.S. military occupation of Japan, the two countries signed a security agreement and the Treaty of San Francisco. These have been the foundation of America’s security assurance as well as the *raison d’etre* for American military presence in Japan today. Japan benefited by investing in its economy instead of its security apparatus. In return, America has benefited from trade with Japan and enjoyed a stable place from which to project power into the region.

Early spats arose on both sides, but the relationship has weathered 65 years intact. America continued its control over the Okinawan Island group until 1972, despite the anger of some Japanese citizens, who felt that parts of Japan were still occupied by the U.S. military. However, forging the alliance also led to Prime Minister Kishi’s resignation in 1960 and a cancellation of President Eisenhower’s visit the same year. Japan’s economic growth started to apply pressure the other way by the 1970s, when the Japanese trade imbalance and influx of cheap manufacturing goods put pressures on American manufacturing companies. After numerous attempts to control the problem

⁷⁰ “SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.”

⁷¹ Kent E. Calder, “China and Japan’s Simmering Rivalry,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (2006): 129–39, JSTOR: 20031916.

with quotas and other methods, the two countries finally resolved the issue of Japan's undervalued currency at the Plaza Accords in 1985.⁷²

U.S.-Japan relations hit a rough patch again in the late 2000s with the reemergence of the Okinawa base issue and the cessation of Japan's Indian Ocean refueling mission, but relations have since grown stronger. Pressure to close Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma led to the agreement to relocate to Henoko in 2006. National and domestic politics have shaped the move plans, and legal battles and protests continue to slow progress to this day.⁷³ Midford notes, "The United States supposedly cancelled some bilateral working level meetings in retaliation" for Japan's indecision on the Henoko relocation.⁷⁴ Japan's contribution to America's Global War on Terror, meanwhile, had involved refueling missions in the Indian Ocean since 2001. In 2009, the DPJ unilaterally ended the refueling mission, a move popular within Japan.⁷⁵ In 2011, American forces stood next to Japanese forces as they dealt with the aftermath of the 3/11 triple disaster. Also, former Secretary of State Clinton, since 2010, provided the strongest reassurances for defending Japan against attacks that include the disputed Senkaku Islands. In the strongest move that Japan could have made to take up an equal footing to its American alliance partner, Prime Minister Abe reinterpreted Article 9 of the Constitution to permit collective self-defense.⁷⁶ At the time of this writing, the United States and Japan have as close relations as they have had at any time in the past.

⁷² T. J. Pempel, "Challenges to Bilateralism: Changing Foes, Capital Flows and Complex Forums," in *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia Pacific*, ed. Ellis S. Krauss and T. J. Pempel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁷³ T&CT and Erin Jones, trans., "Onaga Administration's 2016 Objectives Include Not Allowing Construction of New Bases," *Ryukyu Shimpō*, February 16, 2016, <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2016/02/19/24550/>; Eric Johnston, "New Calls for Reopening Talks on U.S. Okinawa Base Closure Emerge after Ginowan Elects New Mayor," *Japan Times*, February 3, 2016, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/02/03/national/politics-diplomacy/new-calls-reopening-talks-u-s-okinawa-base-closure-emerge-ginowan-elects-new-mayor/#.Vs9wPjX2bIU>.

⁷⁴ Midford, "Foreign Policy Issue," 182.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁷⁶ "Japan OKs Collective Self-Defense, Reinterprets Constitution," July 1, 2014, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/07/01/national/japan-oks-collective-self-defense-reinterprets-constitution/#.VsflcpX2bIU>.

Sino-Japanese relations have oscillated between periods of economic cooperation and periods of hostility since formal recognition was shifted to the PRC. After Japan recognized the PRC as the official government of “one China” in the 1970s, the two countries increased trade relations; China has been Japan’s largest trading partner since 2005.⁷⁷ This does not mean, however, that the relationship can be considered good. The two countries manage the complicated relationship to benefit both economically. While Tokyo has sought to work with Beijing, Japan’s accounting of history, friction over the Senkaku Islands, and other issues have roiled relations time and again. Besides its past occupation of China, Japan also has had trouble breaking the ice with China because of Japan’s support for the Korean War, official recognition of Taiwan until 1972, and implementation of economic sanctions against Beijing after the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989.

More recently, trade has continued to grow while disputes over history and the *Senkaku* Islands came to the forefront. In 2008, Prime Minister Aso Taro visited Beijing and President Hu Jintao visited Tokyo. A feeling of thawing relations would only be superficial, though. In 2010, China protested vociferously when Japan arrested a Chinese fisherman near the *Senkaku* Islands.⁷⁸ Both sides started increasing their presence in and around the *Senkaku* islands. In 2012, Ishihara Shintaro attempted to purchase the islands.⁷⁹ In response, DPJ Prime Minister Kan nationalized the islands. This nationalization led to widespread protests in the streets of China and an increased aggressiveness by the Chinese paramilitary and People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF), including one incident in which a Chinese ship locked on a Japanese vessel with its fire control RADAR.⁸⁰ China then declared an ECS Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in 2013, which only increased fighter sorties and led to dangerous

⁷⁷ Berger, “The Politics of Memory in Japan,” 199.

⁷⁸ Taniguchi, “Ishihara and the Senkakus.”

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Martin Fackler, “Japan Says China Aimed Military Radar at Ship,” *New York Times*, February 5, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/06/world/asia/japan-china-islands-dispute.html?_r=0.

aerobatics that has left both sides close to conflict on several of occasions.⁸¹ China's rise has pushed Japan into a position in which it must balance against Beijing. The idea of Japanese "Asianism," which Hatoyama hoped would bring peace into the region, was replaced with "proactive Pacifism," through which Prime Minister Abe has also considered Japan's Asian neighbors, but carefully selected which neighbors to ally with to balance against Chinese assertiveness.⁸² Neither side appears to be backing down from an increasingly tense geostrategic game of chicken.

South Korea and Japan share relations that can best be described as complex and multifaceted. Japan's brutal occupation of the Korean Peninsula in the early 20th century continues to cloud relations between these two advanced democracies within East Asia. In the 1950s, Japan provided material support for the South and the United States for during the Korean War. Japan has also provided economic aid to the South in the 1960s in lieu of reparations.⁸³ Although Korea had robust trade relations with Japan, numerous flare-ups over the Korean-administered Dokdo Islands—administration of which is contested Japan, which calls them Takeshima—and anger over what many consider Japan's attempt to "whitewash" history, continue to plague bilateral progress.

Kim Dae-jung and Koizumi Junichiro held the Joint Asian Cup in 2002 while trying to work through historical issues as separate matters.⁸⁴ Relations soured in 2003 when Roh Moo-hyun (RMH) adopted a populist style that strained relations with many of Korea's neighbors and allies. Even after the potentially toxic combination of Koizumi and Roh transitioned into the next iteration of leaders, the dispute did not diminish. Japan reacted harshly when President Lee Myeung-bak (LMB) visited the Dokdo Islands in

⁸¹ Fackler, "Japan Says China Aimed Military Radar at Ship;" Martin Fackler, "In a Test of Wills, Japanese Fighter Pilots Confront Chinese," *New York Times*, March 8, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/09/world/in-a-test-of-wills-japanese-fighter-pilots-confront-chinese.html>; Tim Hume, "Close Call as China Scrambles Fighter Jets on Japanese Aircraft in Disputed Territory," *CNN*, May 26, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/26/world/asia/china-japan-jets-scramble/>.

⁸² Sneider, "The New Asianism"; Koh, "Japan 'Maritime Pivot.'"

⁸³ Mark E. Manyin, *Japan-North Korea Relations: Selected Issues* (CRS Order Code RL32161) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2003), <http://www.nautilus.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/CRS.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Moon and Suh, "Security, Economy, and Identity Politics," 588.

2012 after the DPJ's Kan administration refused to reconsider compensation for comfort women.⁸⁵ Bilateral meetings between President Park Geun-hye (PGH) and Abe Shinzo finally occurred in November 2015, the first time since each took office in 2013 and 2012, respectively.⁸⁶ While some hold that relations between the two are thawing, hatred and distrust still exists among Korean citizens.⁸⁷ Some progress has been made on military information-sharing agreements pertaining to the North Korean nuclear missile threat, but this progress should not be overstated. Senior leaders in the Korean government are conflicted over whether Japan poses an existential threat or is an important strategic partner, or perhaps, is a little bit of both.⁸⁸

Japan has increasingly reached out to countries in East Asia to build strategic partnerships and friendships, and to mitigate the risk of an assertive China. Japan's provisioning and training of both the Philippine and Vietnamese Coast Guards is an example of Tokyo's attempt to show regional leadership while simultaneously throwing a wrench into China's CSC claims.⁸⁹ India is another prominent partner that has been growing in importance. Relations between Japan and India have reached new heights under the Abe-Modi leadership, with some going as far as to label the budding diplomatic

⁸⁵ "U.S. Says 'Comfort Women' Issue Was behind Lee's 2012 Isle Visit," *Japan Times*, March 4, 2015, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/03/04/national/history/u-s-says-comfort-women-issue-was-behind-lees-2012-isle-visit/#.Vsgz25X2bIU>; Yong-joo Lee, "For Our Territory Dokdo," *The Korea Times*, September 26, 2012, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2014/01/388_120959.html.

⁸⁶ Justin McCurry, "Japan and South Korea Summit Signals Thaw in Relations," *The Guardian*, November 2, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/02/japan-south-korea-summit-thaw-in-relations>.

⁸⁷ "S Korea and Japan Leaders Meet for First Time in Years," November 2, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/korea-japan-leaders-meet-time-years-151102014419349.html>.

⁸⁸ During public discussions with senior South Korean officers between December 2014 and February 2016, some openly stated to the author that "Japan is South Korea's greatest threat," while others have talked about the shared values and interests that underpin Japan's and South Korea's strong relations.

⁸⁹ "Japan Gives Vietnam 6 Navy Ships amid Regional Tension," August 1, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-28599397?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=%2AMorning%20Brief&utm_campaign=2014_MorningBrief%2008%2001%2014; Sato, "Japan Aid"; Kelly and Kubo, "Insight—Testing Beijing."

relationship a “bromance.”⁹⁰ As the geostrategic equilibrium shifts to accommodate for China’s new place in the regional balance of power, balancing coalitions continue to materialize slowly along China’s periphery.⁹¹

3. Nationalism and Historical Revisionism

Japan’s reconciliation after WWII has not gone well. Unlike Germany’s outward show of remorse, which was met by genuine forgiveness by its neighbors, Japan’s infrequent attempts at reconciliation have been shrugged off by several neighbors as insincere. One issue is that Japanese politicians, especially from the LDP, make insensitive or simply incorrect statements regarding Japan’s wartime history. Examples include attempts to gloss over the Nanjing Massacre and the forced sexual slavery of “comfort women.”⁹² The issue revolves around not only revisionism and nationalism within Japan, but also the nationalism that resonates in the PRC and Korea.

Top-down historical revisionism is a political tool that East Asian countries use for domestic stability, diplomatic positioning, and rationalization of aggressive actions to achieve political objectives. China’s patriotic education accentuates the “century of humiliation” to distract from domestic issues since the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989.⁹³ South Korea’s anger about Japan’s historical occupation is usually triggered by disputes over the Dokdo Islands or reparations for “comfort women.”⁹⁴ Unlike in China, the process in Korea seems to be a bottom-up phenomenon in which the Korean government

⁹⁰ Daniel Twining, “Abe, Modi Exercise Their Right to Help Shape Asia’s Future,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, December 10, 2015, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Abe-Modi-exercise-their-right-to-help-shape-Asia-s-future>; Jaskaran Teja, “The New India-U.S. Reset,” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 36, no. 6 (2014): 375–86, doi:1080/10803920.2014.994418.

⁹¹ Wellington Amorim and Antonio Henrique Lucena Da Silva, “Japan and India: Soft Balancing as a Reaction to China’s Rise,” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 57 (Special Edition) (2014): 73–90, doi:10.1590/0034-7329201400205; Lanteigne, “Water Dragon?”

⁹² Yoshida, “Revising the Past, Complicating the Future,” 1.; Katsuichi Honda, *The Nanjing Massacre: A Japanese Journalist Confronts Japan’s National Shame* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

⁹³ Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 96–103.

⁹⁴ Chung-in Moon and Chun-fu Li, “Reactive Nationalism and South Korea’s Foreign Policy on China and Japan: A Comparative Analysis,” *Pacific Focus* 25, no. 3 (November 30, 2010): 331–55, doi:10.1111/j.1976-5118.2010.01048.x.

is driven by public opinion into harder positions than they would otherwise take. South Koreans sometimes hold Japan at fault for its nation remaining in pieces: it was Japan's original sin that caused the bifurcation of the Joseon Kingdom into two. Without Japan's invasion and subsequent occupation, the Soviet Union and America would have had no occasion to be in Korea.

In Japan, elite opinion, more than the masses, exacerbates relations with the country's neighbors. A majority of the Japanese population has disagreed with the revisionist line. Nippon Kaigi, a historical revisionist organization with significant influence, and groups like it, has advocated for "patriotic education" and the end of "masochistic versions of Japanese history."⁹⁵ Known for its advocacy of the Prime Minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and its members' getting arrested while attempting to travel to Dokdo, this group is disproportionately represented within the government, with 15 out of 19 members of Prime Minister Abe's cabinet at one time being members of this organization.⁹⁶ As in China, the revision of history does not keep confined to a small interest group. History textbooks have become one of the contested grounds for these nationalist organizations.⁹⁷

Measures have been proposed to fix these history issues once and for all, but these efforts for the most part have failed. In response to anger over historical textbooks, a group of historians from Japan, China, and South Korea attempted to create a common history textbook for all three countries. The group has little success in getting the book into schools for each of the countries. While Southeast Asia and the United States believe it is important for Japan to be cognizant of history, the same outpouring of criticism that is heard from China and Korea does not occur. Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam have all suffered under Japanese occupation, and each country has a more favorable view of Tokyo than does China and South Korea. Taiwan is also a partner to the Senkaku

⁹⁵ Norihiro Kato, "Tea Party Politics in Japan: Japan's Rising Nationalism," *New York Times*, September 12, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/13/opinion/tea-party-politics-in-japan.html>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Matthew Penney and Bryce Wakefield, "Right Angles: Examining Accounts of Japanese Neo-Nationalism," *Pacific Affairs* 81, no. 4 (Winter 2008–2009): 537–55, JSTOR: 40377627.

disputes, but the difference between its cooperation with Japan and that of Beijing is as stark as the difference between night and day. This sentiment just puts into perspective how the complex interaction of nationalism and historical memory can confound relations in an already volatile region.

B. ANALYSIS

What accounts for the sense that the regional stability suffered during DPJ administrations? The DPJ faced great difficulty in trying to implement its strategy; fumbling with foreign policy issues, the three DPJ administrations failed to realize the *Yuai* policy. Stability trends have been analyzed, as shown in Figure 1.




























	Pre-2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	Post-2012	Overall trend
Yuai Policy						
Territorial Disputes						
US Alliance						
Security policy						
Legend:						
	The average resulted in greater stability.					
	The average resulted in negligible change in stability.					
	The average resulted in less stability.					

Figure 1. Japan Stability Analysis

Hatoyama's administration's attempts to implement its strategy weakened his political capital while emboldening China and distancing the United States.⁹⁸ This combination of forces was temporarily destabilizing. On the bright side, the DPJ's stance on Japan's official recognition of historic atrocities during WWII improved, at least while

⁹⁸ Krauss, "Crisis Management," 186–8.

it held the office of prime minister. LDP Prime Minister Abe continues to struggle with some aspects of Japan's wartime history, as evidenced by his standing up a committee to question the validity of the Kono Statement, as well as his changed behavior between his first and second administrations. Some progress appears to have been made.

Territorial disputes provided a stumbling block over which the DPJ continually stumbled. Its time in power resulted in major incidents with the PRC over the Senkaku Islands, Lee Myeung-bak's visit to the Dokdo Islands for the first time, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's visit to the Southern Kuriles for the first time, and the addition of missile systems to the disputed islands.

Japan's close ties with the United States suffered under the DPJ. Hatoyama's antagonistic position toward the United States when it came to continued refueling support under Operation Enduring Freedom in the Indian Ocean, the Futenma base issue, and his enunciation of the Yuai policy left policy makers in Washington scratching their heads. Fortunately, very little lasting enmity remains between Washington and Tokyo. The Futenma base issue is the only area in which the DPJ seems to have had a lasting effect, but the settlement of the Henoko relocation is slowly progressing.

Security policies saw slow, incremental changes under the DPJ. The party actively supported enhanced institutionalization and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities for the Ministry of Defense (MOD). The backlash over Senkaku, Dokdo, and the Southern Kurile Islands during the DPJ administrations provided Prime Minister Abe a greater context to push for a reinterpretation of the constitution to allow collective self-defense. Thus, concerning military affairs, the DPJ changed little during its time in office, but the confidence that the Japanese people gained in the military after 3/11 and the realization that Japan lives in an increasingly dangerous neighborhood helped the next administration make monumental leaps that it was not able to make during Abe's first administration. The following subsections assess the contributing factors to instances of heightened instability during DPJ administrations and attribute them either to external constraints, non-party-driven internal constraints, or DPJ policies and actions.

1. Yuai Policy

DPJ attempts to improve Japan's relations with China and South Korea failed, as both countries were less than cooperative. The LDP helped derail policy implementation as well. DPJ inexperience greatly contributed to its failure to implement the Yuai policy and mend relations with other East Asian countries. Tenants of the southwest shift policy may have influenced Abe's success reaching out to India, Vietnam, the Philippines, and other countries in Asia. The DPJ's lasting effect can at best be marginal in this field.

The Yuai policy attempted to reinvigorate Japan's relations with its neighbors and increasing its leadership within East Asia. Its manifesto states, "the DPJ will make the greatest possible effort to develop relations of mutual trust with China, South Korea and other Asian nations, and to strengthen the bonds of solidarity with Asian countries within the framework of the international community."⁹⁹ Unlike the nationalist Koizumi and Abe administrations, real potential seemed possible for defrosting relations with China and South Korea. As Hatoyama explained in 2009, "There are issues between Japan and China that need to be resolved through frank discussion: the historical issue and the territorial issue. Until we sit down and honestly discuss these issues, we can't resolve them"¹⁰⁰ Some of the loudest complaints from China and South Korea would be silenced as DPJ politicians would not make annual pilgrimages to the Yasukuni Shrine. Interestingly enough, it appears that initial overtures for improved relationships would eventually turn into one of the most contentious periods of Sino-Japanese relations since the end of the Cold War.

As amenable as the Yuai policy appeared to be on its face, it was not warmly received by China and South Korea. China was rightly concerned about Hatoyama's ability to espouse ideas like fellowship while also pitching balancing coalitions to China's neighbors. Hatoyama stated, "From Vietnam's perspective, China is a real threat. Japan and Russia can cooperate to assist Vietnam's development, in order to constrain

⁹⁹ David Fedman, "Japan's 'New Asianism' and What It Means for Asia's Historical Rows," *Foreign Policy Blogs Network*, February 5, 2010, <http://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2010/02/05/japans-new-asianism-and-what-it-means-for-asias-historical-rows/>.

¹⁰⁰ Sneider, "The New Asianism," 117.

China or reduce the sense of threat that Vietnam feels.”¹⁰¹ Thus, not only do the usual concerns of historical insensitivity and territorial disputes worry Beijing, it would appear that Japan was actively attempting to multilateralize SCS disputes with countries on each of China’s borders. Even as strategic interdependence increased between the two, China’s military modernization continues to cause reactions that are wholly unsuitable to its leaders. China’s overreaction to Japan’s arresting a fisherman off the Senkaku Islands in 2010 had less to do with Japan’s actions than China’s need to respond in a tough manner for the benefit of its domestic population.¹⁰² Since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, the CCP has inculcated a strain of nationalism that has actively exploited anti-Japanese sentiment to motivate the Chinese population.¹⁰³ Thus, China’s ability to overlook international incidents with Japan or its ease in achieving rapprochement with Japan is tempered by a CCP-fostered anti-Japanese atmosphere. One reason that Hatoyama was not able to make a breakthrough with Hu Jintao is that the history issue is a proxy for other issues that are more important to China, such as Japan’s role in enabling the U.S. presence in the region and the maritime dispute with Japan over the Senkaku Islands. The PRC uses this concern over Japan’s remilitarizing and the conservative leader’s inability to atone for past mistakes as a cudgel for beating Japan and rallying the support of its people. The DPJ’s naivety gave it false expectations of its chances with Chinese rapprochement.

Japan’s relations with South Korea also failed to net the immediate returns that the DPJ wanted. Under the Koizumi-Roh administrations, relations dropped to their lowest point since the end of WWII.¹⁰⁴ Again, unlike the overwhelming chorus, the Dokdo Islands dispute was the driver of angst between Japan and South Korea. The DPJ, unlike the LDP, showed real contrition in Japan’s WWII past, but this fact did not improve the relations between the two countries. During Prime Minister Noda’s

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007); Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 145–48.

¹⁰³ Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*; Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*.

¹⁰⁴ Midford, “Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance.”

administration in 2012, LMB was pressed by his Constitutional Court to act on Japan regarding comfort women reparations. Noda appeared dismissive, and Lee became the first South Korean President to visit the Dokdo Islands, and for good measure, he also offended the Japanese emperor.¹⁰⁵ This divergence in expectations came partly from the DPJ's failure to read the tea leaves, but also from the domestic politics within Korea. With a negative nationalism still ebbing through the ROK, LMB attempted to sway the 2013 elections by successfully appealing to the anti-Japanese sentiment within Korea.

Japan also found it difficult to implement its Yuai policy because of domestic spoilers. The Senkaku Islands and the Dokdo Islands incidents generated an anti-Chinese and anti-Korean nationalism in Japan that was counterproductive to implementing the Yuai policy and threatened to boot the DPJ from power.¹⁰⁶ Domestic political opposition is addressed in greater detail in the next sections.

The DPJ's lack of public relations skills and diplomacy experience contributed to its failures in foreign policy. Its mixed messages to China and failure to ascertain the real nature of each bilateral agreement led both China and South Korea to view the DPJ administrations as weak and feckless. As Pekkanen and Reed note, "Noda was the closest thing to Koizumi...the difference was in the way the two prime ministers handled the media: Koizumi was a master and Noda was a disaster."¹⁰⁷ This misperception resulted in increased chances for disputes to escalate. This apparent instability did not leave any irreparable damage, but it may have actually benefited Japan in a few unintended ways. Under Abe's second administration, Japan has engaged with Vietnam, Australia, the Philippines, and other ASEAN countries.¹⁰⁸ Abe's administration has actively extended assurances to the Philippines that Japan will support Manila over the Spratly Island

¹⁰⁵ Kazuhiko Togo, "Japanese Foreign Policy: Abe II and Beyond: With Future a Perspective of Japan-Korea Relations," in *Japanese and Korean Politics: Alone and Apart from Each Other*, ed. Takashi Inoguchi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 209.

¹⁰⁶ Pekkanen, Reed, and Scheiner, "Japanese Politics between the 2009 and 2012 Elections," 13.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Sato, "Japan Aid," 1.

disputes and Hanoi over the Paracel Islands disputes.¹⁰⁹ Also, Abe's second run in power has been less overtly revisionist than his previous go. While it is hard to say that the DPJ's policies influenced him, the change that started in 2009 may help transform relations in ways that the DPJ could not. To say it another way, Abe's ability not to visit Yasukuni, to give appropriate speeches for the 70th anniversary of WWII, and his deal to provide official reparations to the surviving "comfort women" may be the equivalent to a LDP's "Nixon goes to China."

2. Territorial Disputes

Under the DPJ, all three of Japan's major territorial disputes erupted. Its disputes with three countries—China, South Korea, and Russia—deteriorated. Each country had its own diplomatic and domestic reasons to act provocatively during this period. Japanese domestic politics contributed to the building tension in ways that undermined the DPJ's efforts. For the DPJ, it is not clear how it intended to resolve the territorial disputes in concert with its Yuai plan. Since it had been so forthright with all its other policy prescriptions, the reason the DPJ failed to resolve these disputes properly was more than likely due to its lack of a formulated policy and lack of governing experience.

Two Senkaku incidents threw Japan's rapprochement with China into a tailspin, clearly increasing tension with East Asia. The first incident occurred during the Hatoyama administration. A Chinese fishing vessel was detained for hitting a Japanese maritime patrol ship; the crew was returned, but the captain was arrested and held for 10 days. China briefly severed relations with Japan over the incident, and stopped its shipments of rare earth minerals as well. Chinese patrol boats started appearing in greater numbers.

Another aspect of the Senkaku Islands that brought it to international attention was the attempt of Ishihara Shintaro, then Governor of Tokyo, to purchase the islands from their owner. It has been a particularly durable escalation within the region when

¹⁰⁹ Kelly and Kubo, "Insight—Testing Beijing, Japan Eyes Growing Role in South China Sea Security," 1.

combined with China's actions of sending patrols into the contiguous waters of the Senkaku Islands,¹¹⁰ and unilaterally declaring an ADIZ over the ECSs in 2013 that includes the Senkaku Islands.¹¹¹ Although a dispute occurred over to whom the islands belonged, and China and Japan reached a secret agreement, intensification started to occur before the initial 2010 fishing boat captain incident. Chinese patrols were a regular occurrence prior to the fisherman incident.¹¹²

Japan and Korea's dispute over the Dokdo Islands is only one major issue that drives South Koreans to petition their government for harsher treatment of Tokyo. In 2005, Japan's Shimane prefecture established Takeshima Day,¹¹³ a celebration that the Koreans see as celebrating Japan's wartime conquest of the Korean Peninsula.¹¹⁴ The South has increased rhetoric and action since then with Roh Moo-hyun sending ROKN ships to intercept a Japanese survey mission in 2006.¹¹⁵ Even after Hatoyama attempted to decrease tension between both sides when he took office, problems between the two countries continued. In 2011, several LDP politicians were turned around in South Korea for attempting to access the Dokdo Islands.¹¹⁶ LMB declared that "Japan is no longer influential" as he prepared to step onto the disputed Dokdo Islands on August 10, 2012.¹¹⁷ On November 11, 2010, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev visited the South Kuril Islands, which Japan calls the Northern Territories. He became the first Russian

¹¹⁰ Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus," 4.

¹¹¹ Jun Ozawa, "China's ADIZ over the East China Sea: A 'Great Wall in the Sky'?", *Brookings*, December 17, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/12/17-china-air-defense-identification-zone-osawa>, 1.

¹¹² Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus," 5.

¹¹³ J. Berkshire Miller, "The ICJ and the Dokdo/Takeshima Dispute," *The Diplomat*, May 13, 2014, sec. Features, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/the-icj-and-the-dokdotakeshima-dispute/>.

¹¹⁴ Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance," 88.

¹¹⁵ Nihon Keizai, "Japan to Conduct Maritime Survey near Takeshima Later This Month," April 19, 2006; Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance."

¹¹⁶ Dong-Joon Park and Danielle Chubb, "South Korea and Japan: Disputes over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands," *East Asia Forum*, August 17, 2011.

¹¹⁷ Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus," 2.

President to visit the islands, during the Kan Naoto administration, which resulted in a similar response from Japan.¹¹⁸

International pressures included the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), China, Russia, and Korea. The arrival of the DPJ did not lead to the sudden increase in maritime incidents, but rather the deadline for the submission of claims to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), which caused a similar uptick in the SCS starting in 2009.¹¹⁹ When Japan arrested the ship captain in 2010, Chinese citizens staged major protests.¹²⁰ China detained four Japanese citizens for “security breaches.” Rare earth mineral shipments were stopped and a threatening speech was made against Japan as a result of its actions.¹²¹ In response to Japan’s nationalization of the Senkaku Islands, the PRC declared an ECS ADIZ and began flying sorties around the island on a regular basis. Also, patrols of Chinese Coast Guard ships conducted more routinized patrols in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and, sometimes, the territorial waters surrounding the disputed islands. Russia’s actions appeared due to its intentions to reach an agreement with Japan.¹²² The backlash over the Senkaku Islands became the canary in the coal mine highlighting the latest trend in Chinese aggressiveness that characterizes numerous island disputes throughout the ECS and SCS. Specifically, the Philippines intentionally grounded the BHP Sierra Madre Ayungin Reef, or Second Thomas Shoal, as an outpost in 1999 to protect against Chinese encroachment, and the PRC has attempted on multiple tries to starve out the sailors by preventing resupply.¹²³ The Vietnamese have actively disputed China’s placement of Oil Rig HD-981 within the Vietnamese Economic Exclusion Zone in May 2014. These are just two more instances in

¹¹⁸ Nam-ku Jeong, “Japan Taking Lee’s Dokdo Visit ‘Extremely Seriously,’” *Hankyoreh Sinmun*, August 11, 2012, http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/546710.html.

¹¹⁹ “Chapter XXI Law of the Sea 6. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” September 30, 2015, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXI-6&chapter=21&Temp=mtdsg3&lang=en.

¹²⁰ Sneider, “The New Asianism,” 119–120.

¹²¹ Krauss, “Crisis Management,” 187.

¹²² Jeong, “Japan Taking Lee’s Dokdo Visit ‘Extremely Seriously,’” 1.

¹²³ Jeff Himmelman, “A Game of Shark and Minnow,” *New York Times Magazine*, October 27, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/>.

which the Chinese have attempted to strong-arm a smaller neighbor and dismiss UNCLOS disputes resolution mechanisms.¹²⁴

Many in South Korea believe that Lee Myung-bak was motivated by domestic politics to visit Dokdo, while others point to his inability to work with DPJ Prime Minister Noda to resolve an ongoing issue with comfort women reparations.¹²⁵ Whatever the reasons, Japan faced numerous setbacks to its claims to disputed islands during the DPJ presidency.

Domestically, the Senkaku Fishing vessel incident and the nationalization of the Senkaku Islands undermined the confidence of the Japanese people as to whether the DPJ could effectively manage foreign policy and security issues.¹²⁶ It was a political dream-come-true for the LDP, which wished to undermine the DPJ's rule. Ishihara Shintaro, the former Governor of Tokyo, attempted to purchase the Senkaku Islands from its owner, a move that would have been extremely provocative.¹²⁷

The DPJ ultimately failed to handle territorial issues because it failed to control communications. Although America urged Japan to talk with China prior to nationalizing the Senkaku Islands, Noda raised money and nationalized the islands, but he failed to grasp the likely magnitude of backlash from Beijing or the necessity of ensuring the Ministry of Defense (MOD) had a plan to defend the islands. The handling of the fishing captain incident shows the further difficulty in the DPJ's use of strategic communications. The DPJ appeared to conceal important facts regarding the Chinese captain's apparently intentional collision with the JCG vessel, which was only exposed after a JCG officer posted the video on YouTube.¹²⁸ The events have led to a particularly durable escalation within the region when combined with China's actions of sending

¹²⁴ Carl Thayer, "China's Oil Rig Gambit: South China Sea Game Changer?," *The Diplomat*, May 12, 2014, <http://www.iacspsea.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Chinas-Oil-Rig-Gambit-May-12-2014.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Jeong, "Japan Taking Lee's Dokdo Visit 'Extremely Seriously'"; Miller, "ICJ and Dokdo/Takeshima"; "U.S. Says 'Comfort Women' Issue Was behind Lee's 2012 Isle Visit."

¹²⁶ Pekkanen, Reed, and Scheiner, "Japanese Politics between the 2009 and 2012 Elections."

¹²⁷ Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus," 4.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 188–9.

patrols into the contiguous waters of the Senkaku Islands and unilaterally declaring an ADIZ over the ECSs in 2013. With Korea, the DPJ did a little better. As a result of President Lee's visit to Dokdo, Japan temporarily recalled its ambassador to South Korea.¹²⁹ This response is in keeping with the precedent that Kan Naoto set when President Medvedev visited the Southern Kuriles.

DPJ policies are not solely to blame for the escalation in the Senkaku Islands. The dispute over the islands is as old as the Potsdam Declaration. China and Japan supposedly reached secret agreements for bilateral dispute settlements, but intensification started before the initial 2010 fishing boat captain incident.¹³⁰ Chinese patrols were a regular occurrence prior to the fisherman incident.¹³¹ China's increased military modernization may have made the Senkaku Island event a foregone conclusion no matter who was in power. Yet it is also important to attribute a great deal of responsibility to the LDP for its successful efforts at undermining the DPJ's policies.

3. U.S. Alliance

Japan's reliance on the United States has been attacked from both sides of the political spectrum within Japan. The DPJ's notion of increased attention to the East could allow it to curb Japan's overreliance on the U.S. military for its defense. The Hatoyama administration drove a wedge between Japan and the United States in a number of areas as soon as he came into office; however, the DPJ came reluctantly to the realization that its reliance on the United States was more complicated than originally understood. Unfortunately, some implications of Hatoyama's initial policy decisions still echo today, even while relations with the United States have rebounded to new heights. Hatoyama tried to cancel the MCAS Futenma move to Henoko, ended Japan's maritime refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, and made statements that appeared to distance Japan from

¹²⁹ Jason Strother, "Why Japan Is Angry over South Korea's Visit to an Island," *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 10, 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2012/0810/Why-Japan-is-angry-over-South-Korea-s-visit-to-an-island>.

¹³⁰ Akio Takahata, "A Shaky Start for Hatoyama's Yuai Diplomacy," *The Tokyo Foundation*, November 13, 2009, <http://www.tokyofoundation.org/en/articles/2009/a-shaky-start-for-hatoyamas-yuai-diplomacy>; Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus."

¹³¹ Taniguchi, "Ishihara and the Senkakus," 2.

the United States. American officials were also difficult to deal with during this period. Domestic politics provided negative inertia to mending any ill-advised policies. No matter the policy, the implementation of these policies was done in a haphazard and ad hoc manner that resulted in confusion and mistrust between the two long-standing allies.

The DPJ started its attempts to realign Japan prior to Hatoyama's becoming the prime minister. "Hatoyama and his colleague, the DPJ heavyweight Ichiro Ozawa, both argued that Japan should seek an equidistant relationship, like an equilateral triangle involving Japan, China, and the United States."¹³² One of the first items on the DPJ's chopping block was support to Operation Enduring Freedom maritime refueling, since it has been tied to support for the unpopular Iraq War.¹³³ Confusion over the DPJ's policies gave many in America the wrong message. Daniel Sneider notes:

U.S. observers ... have frequently characterized the DPJ's policies as aligning Japan with a powerful China at the expense of the alliance with a fading superpower. ... The DPJ seeks to manage China's rise through a combination of engagement and the assertion of Japan's own leadership role in Asia.¹³⁴

Hatoyama's plans for implementing an East Asian Community might have sounded like it involved the regional leadership role that America would want Tokyo to play, but America became worried over the DPJ's messaging. It appeared that some attempted to exclude the United States from East Asia and from future Japanese efforts. Takahata notes:

Speaking with Hatoyama at the Prime Minister's Residence on October 6, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong frankly expressed his concern ... stressing that regionalism must be open to other countries, especially the United States, and Hatoyama is said to have agreed. Yet on October 7, speaking before the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo, Foreign Minister Okada excluded the US from his vision, proposing as members Japan, China, South Korea, ASEAN, India, Australia and New

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Takahata, "Shaky Start for Hatoyama," 2.

¹³⁴ Sneider, "The New Asianism," 115.

Zealand, and noted that “Japan has its national interests, and the US has its own.”¹³⁵

A few offhand statements, coupled with significant changes to the operation of the alliance, sent a message to Washington that the DPJ was not intending to send. The United States responded to Tokyo’s behavior by cancelling engagements, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates engaged his counterpart to resolve the issues.¹³⁶ As China became less tolerant of the DPJ and North Korea became more belligerent, the DPJ attempted to mend its ties with the West and forsake its *Yuai*, or fellowship, plan in what Hughes calls “reluctant realism.”¹³⁷ The reversal of the Government of Japan (GOJ) in its agreement to move MCAS Futenma had significant, but transitory implications for the U.S.-Japanese alliance. Ellis Krauss noted Prime Minister Hatoyama attempted to back out of the U.S. agreement to move MCAS Futenma to a spot within Okinawa, an agreement that took over a decade to negotiate.¹³⁸

The new DPJ Administration embarked on a series of policies that both frightened and irritated the new Obama Administration. It ended Japan’s refueling of U.S. and other nations’ ships in the Indian Ocean as part of the war in Afghanistan and pushed for an ‘East Asian Community’ to strengthen economic and political relations between Japan and its neighbors. Although these were long standing DPJ positions, and should not have been a surprise, combined with the new moves on Futenma they shocked Washington.¹³⁹

Domestically, Hatoyama had no one to help him with the Futenma debacle, as he essentially attempted to breach an agreement that took a decade to align with all the domestic political actors. The Okinawan people were one group who became energized in resolving this issue. Since it appeared that the DPJ was going to reopen the case, the political struggle that played out for 10 years had now been reopened by mistake. Even

¹³⁵ Takahata, “Shaky Start for Hatoyama,” 2.

¹³⁶ Hughes, “The Democratic Party of Japan’s New (but Failing) Grand Security Strategy,” 111.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 129.

¹³⁸ Krauss, “Crisis Management,” 183.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

today, the Henoko relocation plan continues to thwart Tokyo's relations with the Okinawan governor.

The discord between the Japanese and U.S. administrations regarding Prime Minister Hatoyama's attempt to change its previous agreement to move Marine Corps Air Station Futenma elsewhere within Okinawa resulted in a rift in the U.S.-Japan Alliance and weakened his credibility within Japan. Fortunately, the 2010 Japanese issue with the Senkaku Islands portended what types of Chinese foreign policies were to come and the Japanese government strengthened its alliance with the United States initially to balance against the Chinese attempts to claim the Senkaku Islands. The DPJ policy's implementation suffered from a failure to signal the proper intentions and from a lack of information, which MOD involvement could have prevented, but fallout has been contained and the U.S.-Japanese alliance may have grown stronger since. The unnecessarily reopening of old wounds cooled relations between Japan and the United States; however, it did not cause a long-term degradation to relations. The United States and Japan operated bilaterally during Operation Tomodachi in 2011, and through other various exercises and real world contingencies spurred by North Korean missile tests. The DPJ simply failed to communicate its intentions in a coherent manner. Takahata demonstrates the confusion with Hatoyama's policy stance on Futenma:

DPJ leaders have been besieged with appeals from the United States, Britain, and Pakistan to continue the refueling mission even after the current law expires in January 2010, and their response has revealed a striking lack of consistency. In the month since the Hatoyama cabinet's inauguration, top government officials have made the following statements: "We are not considering a simple extension" (Prime Minister Hatoyama). "We are not categorically saying No" (Minister for Foreign Affairs Katsuya Okada). "We will withdraw without any fuss, just following the law" (Defense Minister Kitazawa). "We should revise the legal framework and continue refueling operations if possible" (Parliamentary Vice Defense Minister Akihisa Nagashima). "This cabinet should go with the decision not to extend" (Mizuho Fukushima, minister of state for consumer affairs and SDP president).¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Takahata, "Shaky Start for Hatoyama," 1.

Confusion and misspeaking could represent a fundamental disagreement borne out among the diverse party composition of its ruling coalition, or it could be that the DPJ did not know the answer. Either way, domestic pressures and pressure from America all resulted in the DPJ's resentful choice to carry on the status quo in all but a few cases.

4. Security Policy and JSDF Modernization

During its time in power, the DPJ embraced a "vast majority of LDP-advocated and LDP-adopted security policies and approaches," which Oros describes as a "historic moment...where the ruling coalition and opposition coalition expressed substantial agreement about the general contours of Japan's security policies."¹⁴¹ Interestingly, the DPJ released the 2010 National Defense Program Guidelines, which were considered a "dramatic break from the past" with its introduction of new concepts like "'dynamic defense', increased capabilities for the JSDF, the 'southwest shift' of the JSDF to respond to the increased China threat, relaxation of arms export restrictions..., and the strategic use of overseas development assistance (ODA)."¹⁴²

Foreign challenges to Japan's national security were prevalent during the DPJ's time in office. China's continued incursions into Japanese airspace and submarine sightings in Japan's territorial waters and Beijing's enacting of strategic metal trade restrictions provide some examples of a militarized threat on Japan's periphery. While South Korea still does not rival Japan in size or economic might, its hostile behavior pertaining to the Dokdo Islands provided a solid concern for Japanese security specialists to be concerned. Coupling these threats with the increasingly possible North Korea nuclear ballistic missile threat, and Japan has an appropriate reason to fear isolation from its neighbors. These threats provide reasons for Japan to pursue loosening the constraints to its "SDF."

¹⁴¹ Andrew L. Oros, "International and Domestic Challenges to Japan's Postwar Security Identity: 'Norm Constructivism' and Japan's New 'Proactive Pacifism,'" *The Pacific Review* 28, no. 1 (November 24, 2014): 148, doi:10.1080/09512748.2014.970057.

¹⁴² Oros, "International and Domestic Challenges to Japan's Postwar Security Identity: 'Norm Constructivism' and Japan's New 'Proactive Pacifism,'" 149.

The DPJ's attempt to mend ties with its East Asian neighbors actually further harmed relations and may have had an enduring effect by enabling Prime Minister Abe Shinzo to proceed slightly faster with plans for collective self-defense. Abe's reinterpretation of the Constitution for Collective Self-Defense could enable Japan to play a leadership role in any alliance or at least be a more equal partner. Since the DPJ left power, Abe has introduced numerous bills relating to the military and future contingencies that could reduce restrictions on the SDF, allow for more uniformed control, and allow for the use of force during United Nations (UN) mandated ship inspection boardings if compliance is not obtained.¹⁴³ To use Richard Samuels' metaphor, "salami slicing" of Japan's post-war anti-military Yoshida Doctrine is happening in earnest now.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the potential long-term effects could be that the DPJ helps undermine its own opposition for LDP security legislation. As Oros explains, "The virtual collapse of organized party opposition on the left—exemplified by the rise and fall of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) from political power—further facilitates a shift to more activist security policies."¹⁴⁵

C. CONCLUSION

Multiple forces act on regional security in Japan's part of the world. The DPJ's overall effort to change policy depended on its ability to obtain international support for its plans while also retaining enough political legitimacy domestically to implement the changes that require appropriate communications, with which the DPJ struggled greatly. Issues arose, such as during Hatoyama's administration, when leaders could not agree on what the East Asia Community would be. In general, Japan's tough time desecuritizing China to create the equilateral triangle of diplomacy between Japan, China, and America reflects American, Japanese and Chinese domestic and international politics. It might be

¹⁴³ "Japan Eyes Law Changes to Loosen Bureaucrats' Grip on SDF," March 6, 2015, <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20150306p2g00m0dm060000c.html>; "Gov't Considers Allowing Forced Ship Inspections by SDF in Peacetime," February 28, 2015, <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20150228p2a00m0na010000c.html>; "Japan Eyes Law Changes to Loosen Bureaucrats' Grip on SDF."

¹⁴⁴ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 87-94.

¹⁴⁵ Oros, "International and Domestic Challenges to Japan's Postwar Security Identity," 145.

somewhat naïve to think that the disputes could be resolved with a little attention and promises not to frequent the Yasukuni Shrine. One reason appears to relate to new democracies across the board. Japan is not a new democracy, but in the sense of the initial change to DPJ governance, it is experiencing democratic alternation of power for the first time. When a country attempts to democratize its security policies, the new leadership attempts to break old power relationships seen as providing a source of power for the old regime. Since the United States did provide power and legitimacy to the LDP during its crackdown over the Japan Communist Party and the JSP, America was domestically linked to the LDP's dominance.

III. KOREA

From 1998 to 2008, South Korea experienced its first, and, so far, only period of opposition rule. The Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), under Kim Dae-jung (KDJ), and the Uri Party (URI), under Roh Moo-hyun (RMH), was voted into office to bring change for voters who felt disenchanted by a slowing economy and corruption under Kim Young-sam's (KYS's) Grand National Party (GNP). This chapter evaluates what effect KDJ and RMH had on overall regional stability, if any.

To maintain a clear break between the two shifting coalitions, the GNP and the Saenuri party will be referred to as the conservative coalition, or CC. The MDP and URI will be referred to as the liberal coalition (LC). While the parties may not necessarily form coalitions in the formal sense, they broadly follow the same set of policy leanings and are represented by similar interests within society. Also, since social cleavages in Korea are unique, they should not be construed as representing views politically comparable to those of America or other regional democracies.¹⁴⁶

The first section introduces the external sources of instability from Korea's perspective. These sources include balance of power trends, alliance maintenance issues, and trending issues with nationalism and identity that have presented challenges to Korea's maintenance of regional stability. This section finishes by establishing a grading criterion for stability during the periods to before, during, and after each LC president's administration.

The second section analyzes sources of friction to determine whether instability is driven by external pressures, internal political pressures others than those associated with the LC, or from the policies that KDJ or RMH implemented, or failed to implement. It does so by looking at how much difference the policies of KDJ or RMH made on aspects of regional interaction that appeared the most volatile in section one of this chapter.

¹⁴⁶ Russell J. Dalton and Aiji Tanaka, "The Patterns of Party Polarization in East Asia," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 7 (2007): 204.

This chapter finds that both KDJ and RMH played a significant role in shaping domestic politics, but that their effect on regional stability seems to be fleeting at best.

A. EXTERNAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Externally, Korea has often referred to itself as a shrimp among whales due to its position between Japan, Russia, and China.¹⁴⁷ Its strategic picture includes sporadic acts of aggression and nuclear threats by North Korea, maritime disputes with an economically and militarily superior Japan, and active hedging between the two regional great powers, China and the United States. Korea has historically benefited from Western economic systems; however, the Asian Financial Crisis and middle income trap have tested Korea's financial system, as well as its fledgling democracy.¹⁴⁸ Nationalist and historical baggage left over from Japan's annexation of Korea preceding WWI and the brutal occupation that followed continues to strain relations between Korea and Japan in ways that place Korea at odds with America. With the broad contours of the geostrategic background explained, the following section provides more detail.

1. Balance of Power

Considerations of relative military might between countries in the region hold considerable importance, as many countries simultaneously trade with each other and maintain opposition to the other country's position based on territorial disputes, historical disagreements, or active hostilities. South Korea shares a land border with North Korea, but also shares sea borders with China, Japan, and Russia. In terms of military might, population and economic strength, South Korea has long been seen as the lightweight in the region.

The ROK is still considered at war with North Korea; a fact that Kim Jong-Il, and now his son Kim Jong-Un, continue to remind its adversaries through rhetoric and provocation. The demilitarized zone (DMZ) is the most militarized border in the world,

¹⁴⁷ Zhu, "Small Power, Big Ambition," 67.

¹⁴⁸ Perkins, *East Asian Development: Foundations and Strategies*; T. J. Pempel, "Two Crises, Different Outcomes," in *Two Crises, Different Outcomes*, ed. T. J. Pempel and Keiichi Tsunekawa (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 17–38.

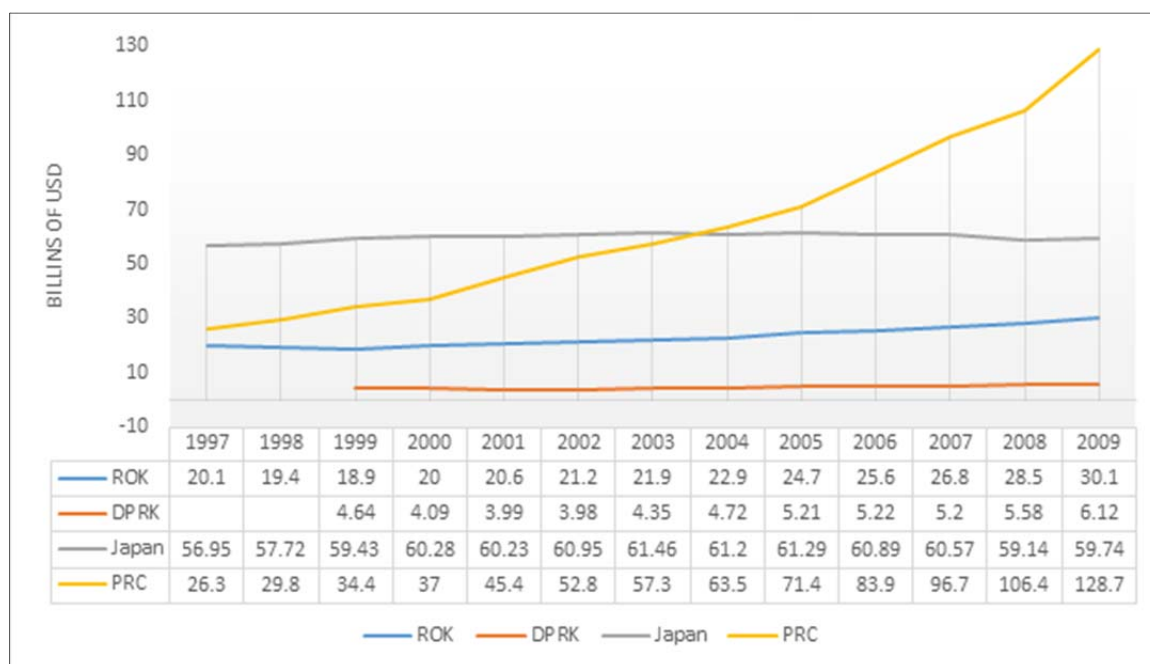
and regular flare-ups have occurred since the 1953 ceasefire.¹⁴⁹ North Korea has historically possessed a larger and more capable military, but the South's six decades of explosive growth have changed the balance of power on the peninsula. Seoul's technological advancement accompanying its economic high growth rate left Pyongyang behind in measures of GDP, amount spent on the military, and quality of advanced military equipment. The military expenditures (MILEX) from 1997 through 2009 for the major countries that factor into Korea's defense calculations are shown in Table 2. (The United States was intentionally excluded, because including it would obscure spending differences by other regional actors. That said, America's security commitments to Korea still matter, and its military spending still eclipses all others in the region.)

South Korea's defense spending is believed to be five times that of North Korea. To compensate, the DPRK has pursued asymmetric capabilities—such as nuclear, cyber, and special forces—to obtain advantages over its technologically superior neighbor.¹⁵⁰ North Korea's nuclear weapons program appears sufficient to deliver a nuclear device to South Korea, and potentially Japan, and this provides a minimum deterrence against outside attempts to topple the Kim regime.

¹⁴⁹ Norman D. Levin and Yong-Sup Han, *Sunshine in Korea: The South Korean Debate over Politics toward North Korea* (Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ Chung-in Moon and Sangkeun Lee, "Military Spending and the Arms Race on the Korean Peninsula," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13, no. 2–10 (March 28, 2010), http://japanfocus.org/-Chung_in-Moon/3333/article.html.

Table 2. South Korean Military Spending¹⁵¹



North Korea has successfully deterred South Korean action with a mixture of asymmetric capabilities and attacks that can be either denied or lead to relatively little retaliation. Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities constrain Seoul's level of retaliation. Since South Korea does not possess nuclear weapons, Pyongyang uses its asymmetric advantage to conduct skirmishes and small-scale attacks without risking a full-scale invasion. Micro-aggressions, such as the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010 and North Korea's attacks on relatively isolated areas, seem designed to limit escalation while appearing tough to its domestic political audience. Finally, conventional munitions placed

¹⁵¹ Adapted from "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database"; Anthony H. Cordesman et al., *The Korean Military Balance: Comparative Korean Forces and the Forces of Key Neighboring States* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011); Bureau of Verification and Compliance, *2005 World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, n.d.), accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/2005/180131.htm>; Bureau of Verification and Compliance, *2012 World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, n.d.), accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/rpt/wmeat/2005/180131.htm>; Keith Crane et al., *Modernizing China's Military: Opportunities and Constraints* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG260-1.html>.

near the DMZ may provide sufficient deterrence, as they threaten to “turn Washington and Seoul into a sea of flames.”¹⁵²

Pyongyang has also acted in clandestine ways to prevent escalation through deniability, akin to Pakistan’s use of non-state proxies in the Jammu and Kashmir region against India.¹⁵³ North Korea denies sinking the ROK’s Cheonan in 2010, although international investigations have since attributed the deadly attack to one of the DPRK’s midget submarines.¹⁵⁴ In the past, North Korean operatives have secretly kidnapped Japanese citizens from the shores of Western Japan. South Korea’s military planners must take these aspects of defense planning into account when thinking about the balance of power vis-à-vis the North.

South Korea’s proximity and devastating history at the hands of Japan, coupled with the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands dispute, also drives ROK defense spending. (ROK forces have occupied these islets with a small armed contingent since 1954).¹⁵⁵ As the amount of militarized disputes in Table 3 show, for Seoul’s provocative behavior with regards to other democratic states (16 of the 17 democratic militarized interstate disputes [MIDs] were with Japan) and this figure/rate actually increased in the LC administration. Although KDJ’s and RMH’s administrations talked of improving ties,¹⁵⁶ their actions tell a different story.

¹⁵² Duk-Ki Kim, “The Republic of Korea’s counter-asymmetric strategy: lessons from ROKS Cheonan and Yeonpyeong Island,” *Naval War College Review*, 65, no 1 (2012): 55.

¹⁵³ Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur, *India, Pakistan, and the Bomb: Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

¹⁵⁴ Thomas J. Eccles et al., *On the Attack against ROK Ship Cheonan* (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, 2010), <http://nautilus.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Cheonan.pdf>.

¹⁵⁵ Miller, “ICJ and Dokdo/Takeshima”; “Summary of Dokdo Chronology,” accessed September 27, 2015, http://en.dokdo.go.kr/images/s02/img_mapkorea_b.jpg; “Japanese Territory: Takeshima,” July 30, 2015, http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/takeshima/page1we_000061.html.

¹⁵⁶ Moon and Suh, “Security, Economy, and Identity Politics,” 561–602.

Table 3. South Korean Militarized Interstate Disputes¹⁵⁷

Years	Total MID	MID/year	Dem MID	Dem MID/Year
48-98	103	2.06	13	.26
98-08	15	1.5	4	0.4

Although the numbers for North Korea are unreliable, it may be possible to glean a reversal in defense spending for the North, corresponding with the 2000 summit between Kim Jong-Il and KDJ. The first meeting of its kind, it brought a feeling of détente to the relations between the North and South.¹⁵⁸ This was potentially again the case during the Kim-Roh relations that were at their height during a second summit in 2007. The expenditure increase correlates with the hardline policies that President Lee Myung-bak instituted upon taking office. In the South, defense spending slowed and even decreased for a time under KDJ. RMH, however, did not decrease spending. South Korean military spending as a percentage of national budget remained around 12% after Roh took office in 2003.¹⁵⁹ It does not appear that the KDJ or RMH administrations drastically altered the regional balance of power with their spending. Seoul's defense spending kept pace with its perceived adversaries (so long as Seoul does not view Beijing as a potential adversary, which it does not).¹⁶⁰

Seoul's reaction to China's rise has been to move closer toward Beijing, and the progress of increasing Sino-Korean relations has been constant throughout political party changes. David Kang characterizes Seoul's approach to China as “between balancing and

¹⁵⁷ Adapted from “Militarized Interstate Disputes (V4.1),” February 5, 2104, <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/MIDs>.

¹⁵⁸ “SIPRI Military Expenditure Database”; Cordesman et al., *The Korean Military Balance*; Zachary T. Elkin, “Has Korea Witnessed Democratic Peace?,” (research paper, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015).

¹⁵⁹ Cordesman et al., *The Korean Military Balance*, 9.

¹⁶⁰ Chung-in Moon and Seung-Chan Boo, “Korean Foreign Policy: Park Geun-Hye Looks at China and North Korea,” in *Japanese and Korean Politics: Alone and Apart from Each Other*, ed. Takashashi Inoguchi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 221–48; Samuel S. Kim, “The Changing Role of China on the Korean Peninsula,” *International Journal of Korean Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004): 79–114; Victor D. Cha, “Engaging China: Seoul—Beijing Detente and Korean Security,” *Survival* 41, no. 1 (1999): 73–98, doi:10.1093/survival/41.1.73.

bandwagoning.”¹⁶¹ Perhaps a more appropriate word would be “accommodating” China’s rise, which puts South Korea’s position frequently at odds with its ally, the United States. From a strategic standpoint, Korea perceives that America’s influence in East Asia is diminishing. Korea cannot compete with China’s growth and military spending alone. Population wise, the PRC is more than 25 times the size of Korea and its GDP is 10 times that of Korea’s and growing over three times as fast.¹⁶² Korean policies moving closer to China, or hedging, would make sense from a realist perspective, as it would appear Korea is increasing economic and political ties with China, while still attempting to maintain relations with America.¹⁶³

While America’s presence offsets the threats the ROK faces from the North and its perceived concerns about Japan, it also places Korea directly between a rising China and a waning America. North Korea’s aggressive acts have been numerous, but also low-scale for the most part. South Korea’s balance of power relative to Japan has changed only slightly, and still occupies many military leaders in Seoul.

2. Allies and Trade Relations

Seoul has benefited economically and militarily from its alignment with the United States, but over the two decades since the end of the Cold War, these ties have started to lose their relevance because of Seoul’s diminishing security concerns. Korea’s relations with the North have been marred by security flare ups, but a decrease in tensions occurred during the period where South Korea took a more accommodating position toward Pyongyang. Sino-Korean trade and cooperation has flourished as South Korea has accommodated Beijing’s achievement of regional great power status. Finally, Korea’s warming of relations with Beijing also corresponds to a degradation of bilateral relations with Japan, whose domestic politics have united negative sentiment against it.

¹⁶¹ David C. Kang, “Between Balancing and Bandwagoning: South Korea’s Response to China,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2009): 28.

¹⁶² “World Bank Data,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/>.

¹⁶³ Kang, “Between Balancing and Bandwagoning,” 22.

South Korea's view of the world is shaped by post-Cold War politics. As a market economy that would go on to be an advanced market-style democracy, the ROK profited much from residing in America's sphere of influence. Not only did the South benefit from security alliance that rebuffed the DPRK, but its economy flourished by following the Japanese economic model of East Asian development while relying on the security umbrella and economic aid of the West.¹⁶⁴ Security assurances have become less important as the ROK military has surpassed North Korea's military on many indicators and may be able to defeat an attack by the North without outside assistance.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, Korea's blame of the West for its economic quagmire following the AFC, which KDJ called the "IMF Crisis," shows that not all of Korea maintains as rosy a view of Western institutions.¹⁶⁶ These trends have distanced Seoul and Washington on certain aspects, although only ever so slightly given how close U.S.-ROK relations remain today.¹⁶⁷ For example, elites do not appear ready to change the status quo with regards to American basing within South Korea even as public sentiment has shifted against the continued American presence. Yeo notes that Korea's protests have been effectively managed by the elites and military, while Moon states that anti-Americanism is a natural part of the democratization process and is not a wholesale revolt against America as an ally, but a healthy expression of democratic freedom that Koreans wish to express.¹⁶⁸ Cooley blends the two arguments further by noting that many democratizing countries that host American bases see new politicians tap into the sentiment of anti-Americanism, especially if American can be seen as condoning the brutality and repression of the

¹⁶⁴ Perkins, *East Asian Development*, 69.

¹⁶⁵ Cordesman et al., *The Korean Military Balance*, 17–21.

¹⁶⁶ Seung-hwan Kim, "Anti-Americanism in Korea," *The Washington Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2003): 109–22, doi:10.1162/016366003761036525.

¹⁶⁷ Patrick M. Morgan, "American Grand Strategy and the US-ROK Alliance," *Pacific Focus* XXIV, no. 1 (April 2009): 39, doi:10.1111/j.1976-5118.2009.01015.x.

¹⁶⁸ Andrew Yeo, *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-U.S. Base Protests* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Moon, "Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, Consolidation."

previous regime.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Korea has become a more reluctant partner with the West due to some of the broad trends that have already been mentioned.

Increasing interconnectedness and diplomatic ties with China have been Korea's response to China's continued economic and military growth. The PRC is Korea's largest trade partner, surpassing the United States as the largest importer of Korean goods in 2003, and it imports twice as much as America as of 2014.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, Korea has come to see China as a productive partner for resolving inter-Korean issues, as the PRC has played a crucial leadership role in the six-party talks aimed at North Korean denuclearization. China's interests in maintaining a divided Korea are based on the American military presence on yet another of its land borders. South Korea's distancing itself from America and deepening relations with Beijing reduces this concern and could lead to Chinese support for reunification, especially if it sees reunification as the only alternative to North Korea going to pieces. Finally, China and Korea share similar concerns about increased nationalism and historical revisionism within Japan. Most recently, South Korean President Park's attendance at the 70th anniversary parade celebrating the defeat of Japan in WWII shows an increase in cooperation between the two countries on issues related to North Korea and shared views about relations with Japan.¹⁷¹

America's relations are strained by South Korea's legacy of brutal authoritarian rule under Park Chun-hee and Chun Doo-hwan. Suppression of democracy during the early days of the ROK was brutal under the reigns of Chun Doo-hwan, especially in relations to the Gwangju Massacre. Koreans direct criticism at Washington's hypocritical sponsorship of dictators and the suppression of democratic activists within the ROK for Cold War geopolitical reasons. The cleavages are counterintuitive, as advocates for

¹⁶⁹ Alexander Cooley, "Democratization and the Contested Politics of U.S. Military Bases in Korea: Toward a Comparative Understanding," *Kukje Kwan 'Gye Yongju (IRI Review)* 10, no. 2 (2005): 215.

¹⁷⁰ "Statistics and Reports," accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.kita.org/>.

¹⁷¹ Scott A. Snyder, "Park's Decision to Join Xi Jinping's World War II Commemoration," *Asia Unbound*, September 2, 2015, <http://blogs.cfr.org/asia/2015/09/02/parks-decision-to-join-xi-jinpings-world-war-ii-commemoration/>.

democracy support manifestly anti-American sentiment, while the pro-American coalition often yearns for the return of authoritarian rule.¹⁷²

3. Nationalism and Identity Politics

The rise of nationalism in East Asia and its effect on regional stability has had significant implications for the major powers in the region. Territorial disputes among Northeast Asian countries provide the impetus for future conflict, or at the least, bitter disputes, even though the land contested is, for the most part, not suitable for habitation.¹⁷³ State control of historical narratives and contestation of history between countries fuels animus between East Asian neighbors. The ethnic nationalism that unites the divided Korean people has inherently stabilizing and destabilizing components that affect regional security.

East Asia found itself thrust into the concept of the nation-state only after the WWII, and this late entry into the realm of modernity has left East Asian countries bitterly antagonistic regarding geographical boundaries. Japan's historic subjugation of much of East Asia in the run up to and during WWII leaves many disputed islands between Tokyo and its neighbors. China's rise has driven its need to assert claims on islands that it sees as historically Chinese. Historical interpretations of Japan's conquest and brutal occupation of its neighbors clouds any progress on dispute resolution between parties.

Japan's claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands have been linked by Beijing and Seoul, respectively, to Japan's brutal occupation of large parts of China and the Korean Peninsula starting in the 1890s. The Japanese-administered

¹⁷² Haesook Chae and Steven Kim, "Conservatives and Progressives in South Korea," *Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (Autumn 2008): 77–95; Doh Shull Shin and Byeong-Kuen Jhee, "How Does Democratic Regime Change Affect Mass Political Ideology? A Case Study of South Korea in Comparative Perspective," *International Political Science Review* 26, no. 4 (October 2005): 381–96, JSTOR 30039023.

¹⁷³ While the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands have been inhabited at various points in the past 100 years, both are considered non-life sustaining. The ROK Army continues to maintain a small contingent of soldiers on Dokdo, but they are provisioned with supplies to maintain the austere outpost. The Senkaku islands were home to a whaling station in the first half of the 20th century, but they have been uninhabited since after WWII.

Senkaku Islands are disputed by Beijing and Taipei, but Japan refuses their historic claims, and, therefore, refuses to submit to arbitration. History also clouds the dispute over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands, which South Korea sees as one of the first territories conquered by Japan prior to WWII.¹⁷⁴ Although the islands are not inherently life-sustaining, and provide no more than the potential for natural resources and a sense of prestige, some in Korea have sought to turn them into a cultural icon akin to the Statue of Liberty or the Eiffel Tower.¹⁷⁵ Japanese nationalism has a role in exacerbating Japan-Korea relations regarding the Dokdo Islands as well. In March 2005, Japan's Shimane prefecture passed legislation proclaiming February 22nd as "Takeshima Day."¹⁷⁶ Many Japanese see the incorporation of "Takeshima" as an administrative event to be celebrated; however, the Korean people view it "as the celebration of Japan beginning its colonial conquest of the Korean peninsula."¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the contestation over the islands can become extremely volatile.

As the PRC continues to grow economically and militarily, it has asserted its claim to territories that Beijing considers as inherently Chinese. China's supposed irredentist claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the Paracel Islands and nearly all of the SCS via the Spratly Islands are a sample of the claims it has made within the past 20 years. These claims, and actions to legitimize the claims, increased the number of militarized interstate disputes between the JSDF, JCG and China's PLAAF and Navy in Northeast Asia. In an attempt to further legitimize Beijing's use of fighters to contest Japan's presence around the Senkaku Islands, it unilaterally declared an ECS ADIZ that not only overlapped with Japan's previously declared ADIZ, but also caused

¹⁷⁴ "Summary of Dokdo Chronology"; "Takeshima Official Website Japan"; "Dokdo, Beautiful Island of Korea," 2013, <http://dokdo.mofa.go.kr/eng/index.jsp>.

¹⁷⁵ Eun-joo Lee, "Activist to Create Body for Dokdo," *Korea Joong Ang Daily*, July 27, 2012, <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=2956955>; Lee, "For Our Territory Dokdo."

¹⁷⁶ Miller, "ICJ and Dokdo/Takeshima,"

¹⁷⁷ Paul Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance," in *Changing Power Relations in Northeast Asia*, ed. Marie Soderberg, East Asian Economics and Business Series (London: Routledge, 2011); Erika M. Pollmann, "The Politicization of the Liancourt Rocks Dispute and its Effect on the Japan-South Korea Relationship," *CSIS:Issues and Insights*, 15, no 10 (2015), 2.

consternation in Seoul due to its overlapping South Korea's underwater rock, Ieodo.¹⁷⁸ Per UNCLOS, Seoul's claim to Ieodo is illegitimate, as Ieodo does not appear above the surface of the water, but this still became a source of contention between the two countries.¹⁷⁹

China's northeast territories project has also drawn heat from South Korea. China's scientific research into the artifacts of the Goguryeo Dynasty drew attention when a 2004 semi-official report referred to the Goguryeo people as one of China's ethnic minorities. This claim is controversial because Koreans believe the Goguryeo are their ancient ancestors and still derive the name Korea from the defunct kingdom.¹⁸⁰ The unfortunate part is that both may be correct. The Goguryeo were traditionally one of three kingdoms on the Korean Peninsula and did inhabit land in what is now part of Siberia and Manchuria. Nonetheless, how the memory of the Goguryeo Dynasty is treated within Japan and Korea is still disputed, albeit much less so than those disputes that China and Korea share with Japan.

State construction of history as a political tool is widely used and abused within East Asia. One of the clearest manifestations occurs in school textbooks, but China and Japan also have some unique practices that also should be pointed out. Nationalism is at the heart of the most contentious bilateral issues between Japan and its neighbors, China and South Korea. Although more countries suffered at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army during WWII and before, only a handful of countries continue to keep those actions as a contemporary foreign policy issue. Historical memory and history textbook issues are a perennial source of rancor that typically results in diplomatic statements, but rarely rises above that.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Jun Osawa, "China's ADIZ over the East China Sea: A 'Great Wall in the Sky'?", *Brookings Institute: Research*, December 17, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/12/17-china-air-defense-identification-zone-osawa>.

¹⁷⁹ Ankit Panda, "The East China ADIZ and the Curious Case of South Korea," *The Diplomat*, November 28, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/11/the-east-china-adiz-and-the-curious-case-of-south-korea/>.

¹⁸⁰ Moon and Li, "Reactive Nationalism," 10–12

¹⁸¹ Moon and Suh, "Japan-South Korea Relations," 524–525.

China's patriotic education has been an intentional effort by the CCP to use a narrative of national humiliation to redirect domestic anger toward external countries, with Japan overwhelmingly receiving the most attention.¹⁸² Great monuments celebrating humiliating events have been erected in places all around mainland China to help inculcate a sense of anger and resolve among its citizens. Prominent examples include the statue of two hands breaking an opium pipe in celebration of the First and Second Opium Wars, The Nanjing Massacre memorial, and many others that the central government has erected since the Tiananmen Square incident to steer the narrative away from CCP oppression and toward a more useful narrative about external forces attacking China once upon a time.¹⁸³ Another interesting twist is that the CCP did not acknowledge what happened at Nanjing until much later, possibly due to its absence in the KMT stronghold. Yet, once the KMT stopped staking claims to the mainland in the 1990s, China let details of the massacre resurface (while continuing to suppress any mention of the Tiananmen Square incident against its own citizens). China reserves much of its vociferous rhetoric for Japan, which is not innocent, itself.

Japanese leadership since the rise of Koizumi Junichiro in 2001 has been markedly more nationalist in that it has discounted Japan's atrocities during WWII and focuses the narrative on restoring Japan's greatness. Koizumi recommenced paying homage to the war dead at *Yasukuni Jinja* every year. This action ties Japanese politicians to a revisionist history of the past, because, even though Japan visits the graves of their dead relatives as part of their religion, the *Yasukuni* Shrine contains the remains of 14 Class-A war criminals.¹⁸⁴ Another criticism of the shrine is that its WWII Museum, the *Yushukan*, grossly distorts historical facts of WWII seemingly painting Japan's actions as those of a liberator from Western powers.¹⁸⁵ Revisionism of textbooks within Japan to paint its WWII occupation of Korea in a positive light is souring relations

¹⁸² Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 204–201; Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, 140–46.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Daiki Shibuichi, "The Yasukuni Shrine and the Politics of Identity in Japan: Why All the Fuss?," *Asian Survey* 45, no. 2 (March 2005): 197–215.

¹⁸⁵ Yoshida, "Revising the Past, Complicating the Future," 6.

between the two countries. Specifically, the “Committee to Examine History (Rekishi Kento Iinkai)” was formed by LDP lawmakers to protest the government’s efforts to seek reconciliation on history issues.¹⁸⁶ Both China and Korea have repeatedly lodged diplomatic protests against Japan’s approval of history books that tend to “whitewash” historical accounts of some of the most gruesome aspects of the war. Examples include calling the Nanjing Massacre a disputed event and excluding talk about the sexual slaves that Japan euphemistically called “comfort women.” While the “historical amnesia” that Japan has been accused of roils relations with its neighbors, only a small share of the political elite falls into this fundamentally revisionist camp.¹⁸⁷ Thus, even as a few rogue politicians make headlines for their revisionist beliefs and actions, it diverges with the phenomenon in China or that of Korea.

Korean racial nationalism based on the Korean belief that they are racially unique has been a driving force behind South Korea’s attempt to reunify in the late 1990s and early 2000s.¹⁸⁸ KDJ’s Sunshine Policy received wide popularity in the South from the 386ers and others who increasingly felt that the ruling coalition’s hardline rhetoric had failed to move the DPRK closer toward reunification.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, the DPRK has used the identity of being the true keepers of the Minjok nationality as a way to dispute the South’s legitimacy as “true Koreans.” While this study is unsure about the rationality, on both sides of the DMZ, of disputing racial and ethnic supremacy on the basis of purity, this is a source of contention that divides ethnic Koreans and adds pressure in the south to unite the divided nation. This identity manifests itself in interstate politics by historically linking Japan and America to the genesis of splitting Korea into two in WWII and the Cold War, respectively. Also, America’s continued presence in Korea, especially during the administration of George W. Bush, resulted in resentment and hostility from those in the south who wished for unification. As a result, an anti-American tinge can be expected

¹⁸⁶ Berger, “The Politics of Memory in Japan,” 196.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 202.

¹⁸⁸ Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics and Legacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 2–6.

¹⁸⁹ Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, 138–140.

to be apparent in the LC. If this belief holds true, Korea's attempts to accept Japan's apologies and deescalate tensions between the two countries may not be realized until after unification occurs.

B. ANALYSIS

When analyzing the impact that South Korea, as a middle power, has made on overall regional stability, it would be an exaggeration to attribute instability within East Asia solely to any action that a specific South Korean president has taken. Some issues remain, however, for which Korea plays an outsized role. The following analysis covers how Korea reacts to China's rise, Korea's role in facilitating America's presence in the region, attempts at unification or managing North Korea, and the ROK's management of its relations with Japan. Korea is uniquely situated, in terms of its physical proximity and relations, midway between the West and China, to help facilitate China's peaceful rise. Both Beijing and Washington attempt to keep Seoul on good terms, but Korea makes its greatest contribution to regional stability when it steers a middle course between the two regional great powers. While aspects of China's rise are clearly out of Korea's control, Seoul has fostered good will over the past decades and has accumulated influence with Beijing at least concerning areas that affect Korean interests.

Korea's relations with America are similarly important to regional stability, because the ROK hosts America's presence, which acts as a counterbalance to Beijing, a check on Pyongyang's aggressions, and a substitute for Japan's rearmament. Even as America welcomes Korea's democratization, it is concerned that this action has strained relations greater than at any other time in recent memory. To what extent was this inevitable?

South Korea also figures prominently when discussing North Korea, a prime destabilizing force. South Korea has influence with its unique position vis-à-vis North Korea, yet the new approach to inter-Korean politics did not lead to enduring change. KDJ and RMH followed a new approach to inter-Korean relations that started out with promising results, but in the end, the Sunshine Policy seems to have little to no long-term effect.

Finally, KDJ, RMH, and LMB all promoted the idea of mending ties with Japan; however, relations between them soured during the 15 years of 1998–2012. Relations only started to thaw again under PGH thereafter. This dyadic relationship has been on the verge of conflict recently and is one of the tensest relationships between two coherent democracies.¹⁹⁰

In Figure 2, each period is displayed with its corresponding effect on regional stability, with an up arrow indicating that stability was increased during the period on average, down means stability was decreased, and sideways annotates no significant change in stability. The chart is based on, and summarizes, the author’s own analysis in the sections below. This chart only assesses trends in stability throughout different administrations. The remainder of the chapter examines whether that stability or instability of each area can be attributed to external constraints, internal non-policy constraints, or actual policy decisions, to determine whether Presidents KJD and RMH actually made a difference.
























	Pre-98	1998–2003	2003–2008	Post-2008	Overall
China					
U.S. Alliance					
North Korea					
Japan					
Legend:  The average of the years has resulted greater stability.  The average of the years resulted in negligible effect to regional stability  The average of the years resulted in less stability.					

Figure 2. South Korea Stability Analysis

¹⁹⁰ Elkin, “Has Korea Witnessed Democratic Peace?”

1. China's Rise

China would have grown militarily and economically regardless of South Korea's actions. The aspect that the ROK had an impact on influencing was to what extent it invested economically in China's growth, assuaged China's fears of encirclement through constructive diplomacy, and worked with China to deal with regional issues. All in all, the ROK has been consistent in its constructive approach to Beijing since Roh Tae-Woo (RTW) was elected. Overcoming suspicion and 50 years of adversarial tensions, China and South Korea accomplished rapprochement in a relatively short period while Seoul brought Beijing into multiple regional organizations. RTW and KYS established a positive trend prior to KDJ's election. Ties deepened under KDJ and RMH. However, RMH's administration was seen as a net equal due to its closeness with the United States by the end of his presidency. LMB and PGH also successfully increased ties with Beijing, culminating in President Park's signing of the China-South Korea FTA in June 2015 and her attendance at China's 70th Anniversary Anti-Japan Parade in September.¹⁹¹ From careful consideration, it appears that the KDJ and RMH administrations did little to change the stable rise of China and increase in relations.

Détente in Sino-South Korean relations occurred in 1992 under RTW. Major geostrategic forces smoothed the way for mutual recognition and normalization. First, China's fear of the Soviet Union's creating a wedge between China and North Korea was diminishing by 1989 as the relations thawed. Beijing no longer felt the need to hold Pyongyang close, and could therefore reach out to the South. Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening provided an opportunity for Seoul to invest in China's potentially enormous market. Economic ties slowly increased through the 1980s and 1990s due to each country's complimentary exports.¹⁹² While warming relations with China were not predetermined by external events, the economic benefits for conducting business, mutual distrust of Japan, and mutual concern of North Korea, albeit from different vantage

¹⁹¹ Shannon Tiezzi, "It's Official: China, South Korea Sign Free Trade Agreement," *The Diplomat*, June 2, 2015.

¹⁹² Cha, "Engaging China," 87.

points, provided multiple reasons and opportunities for KDJ and RMH to continue policies already being pursued regarding China.

Internally, the powerful chaebol, Korea's business conglomerates, have influenced government decisions significantly and have an interest in closer Sino-Korean relations. The impact on Korea's economy of the aftermath of the AFC not only generated internal pressure for the government to increase economic ties with China, but also provided KDJ with pressure to hedge against the Western system that had miscalculated the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recovery package and exacerbated the recovery by not acting as quickly as Korea perceived it could have.¹⁹³ Furthermore, China's change in policies vis-à-vis Korea resulted in the potential to change nationalist rhetoric by, as Victor Cha terms it, the "functional amnesia" of China's role in the Korean War emphasizing its strong tributary relations "during the Yi Dynasty of 1392–1910."¹⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it still requires internal leadership to steer the narrative successfully for an increasingly nationalistic citizenry.

KDJ continued to increase the gap between the ROK and the United States to reassure China that Korea was a safe bet. Chinese assistance during the AFC recovery also helped. Beijing's refusal to lower its exchange rates and its 7bn Won of preferential loans helped Korea's recovery. KDJ would continue to provide preferential loans to China and champion its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.¹⁹⁵ RMH's policies were not different toward Beijing, but his use of negative nationalism provided one of the few examples since normalization in which Sino-Korean relations went through a rough patch. China's Northeast Asia Project created a storm in South Korea when China claimed that the ancient Goguryeo kingdom was one of China's ethnic minorities. The controversy did not reach the same intensity as Japan's assertion of sovereignty over the Dokdo Islands, but the issue promoted public distrust of Beijing

¹⁹³ Perkins, *East Asian Development*, 156–57.

¹⁹⁴ Cha, "Engaging China," 78–79.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88–89.

related to its treatment of history.¹⁹⁶ RMH's emphasis on the Northeast Asia Project was more of a road bump than an obstacle to increased Sino-Korean relations, but this has as much to do with Beijing's handling as it does RMH's actions.

To say these flare-ups only happen under the LC would be a mistake as well. PGH's administration protested China's unilateral declaration of an ADIZ in 2013. China's ADIZ overlaps part of Korea's airspace off the coast of Jeju Island and also completely envelops the submerged rock known as Ieodo. Again, cooler heads prevailed on both sides, and South Korea has gone on to sign a FTA with China in 2015 and is championing a "China-U.S.-ROK trilateral strategic dialogue."¹⁹⁷ Regardless of the administration, South Korea continues to make progress in institutionalizing China's role in the region while increasing its economic interdependence and diplomatic reliance on China, especially with regard to North Korea. Korea's policies of engagement and the reciprocal good will created by China provided the trust to handle even territorial and historical shake-ups that may have presented real problems in other relations. KDJ's policies and actions were definitely positive, while RMH's positive policies cancelled the negative nationalism he incited as a result of China's Northeast Asia Project.

2. U.S.-ROK Alliance

The U.S. Korean alliance persists as one of the most important bilateral alliances. Democratization in Korea and democratic-party change has widened disagreements on major issues between the two countries, but the foundations of the alliance remain intact. Mutual respect has blossomed out of disagreements regarding how each side should deal with different geostrategic issues, and the bond is no better and no worse today than when KDJ took office in 1998.

Externally, the end of the Cold War and a thaw in Sino-Korean relations, as well as Sino-Russian relations, decreased the severity of Seoul's perceived security dilemma.

¹⁹⁶ Sang-hun Choe, "Tussle over a Vanished Kingdom -Asia-Pacific-International Herald Tribune," *The New York Times*, October 12, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/12/world/asia/12iht-history.3134615.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

¹⁹⁷ Moon and Boo, "Korean Foreign Policy," 224-225.

Coupled with its relative military strength vis-à-vis the North, South Korea's need for U.S. security assurances has diminished. The ROK Army still has not taken wartime operational control of the Combined Forces Command within Korea, but multiple plans have been made and fell through regarding the shift.¹⁹⁸ As of the present writing, these talks have been pushed back until at least 2020.¹⁹⁹ President George W. Bush's election provided one source of instability within the U.S.-ROK relationship.²⁰⁰ While KDJ found a willing partner in President Bill Clinton and his attempts to hold a summit prior to leaving office in 2000, Bush's fiery rhetoric set back KDJ's efforts at rapprochement with the North and thereby created friction between the two administrations. American rhetoric toward North Korea became increasingly hawkish in George W. Bush's first term; Korea began to lean closer to China to find a non-military solution to the DPRK nuclear issues. While these differences were short-lived, other areas would further roil relations between the two countries. Some in America see Korea's tilt toward China as troublesome, especially where Japan is concerned. Instead of a robust trilateral relationship between three of the region's vibrant liberal democracies, South Korean military leaders have, on occasion, referred to Japan as the "greatest threat to South Korea" and have shown various other perspectives that diverge from America's perspectives in the region.

Domestically, Korea's democratization has given it the potential to diverge with the United States on foreign policy to a greater extent than previously attempted. While Korea supported America's war efforts by sending troops during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, it has not necessarily toed the line on America's attempt to trilateralize the U.S.-ROK-Japan security agreements or on Washington's calls to denounce China for its actions in the SCS. While some would view South Korea as an

¹⁹⁸ Raymond F. DuBois, *Transferring Operational Control of South Korean Forces* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010), <http://csis.org/publication/transferring-operational-control-south-korean-forces>.

¹⁹⁹ Hwee-Rhak Park, "An Analysis and Lessons on South Korea's Attempt and Postponement of the OPCON Transition from the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command," *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 27, no. 3 (2015): 347–63.

²⁰⁰ Morgan, "American Grand Strategy and the US-ROK Alliance," 35.

alliance partner gone awry, a better way to interpret Seoul's action is as an exercise of its rights to pursue its grand strategy even when this tends to diverge slightly from America's vision. As Morgan states, "the alliance needs more balance to repair it."²⁰¹ RMH did foster negative nationalism toward America to help win his election in 2002, effectively souring bilateral relations during the end of KDJ's presidency and providing himself with a significant amount of popular support within Korea. LMB eventually signed the ROK-U.S. strategic partnership and U.S. Korea FTAs and PGH has worked to "trilateralize" the strategic partnership to include China. Even with these differences in foreign policy perspective, the United States and South Korea have, in the long run, continued to have a vibrant alliance that mutually benefits both countries and will for some time to come. Any detriment that RMH or KDJ appeared to impose upon bilateral relations was transitory at best. Out of RMH's destabilizing policy toward the United States, the ROK achieved autonomy for its foreign policy by wrestling it away from Washington. The relationship might not look as robust today as it did 20 years ago, but this thesis argues that the new alliance is built on a foundation of mutual respect and has now weathered democratic politics in both countries.

3. North Korea

KDJ democratized security policy in Korea with his Sunshine Policy of North Korean engagement. Many claim democratization of security policy can lead to conflict.²⁰² By contrast, it would seem that inter-Korean relations improved during the KDJ and RMH administrations. Although short lived, the Sunshine Policy and its replacement under RMH decreased tensions on the peninsula while they were in office.

Three external influences impact how Seoul and Pyongyang interact concerning inter-Korean relations, regardless of the intentions of South Korean policy. As one of North Korea's gravest threats, the United States' policy changes and rhetoric have an

²⁰¹ Morgan, "American Grand Strategy and the US-ROK Alliance," 38.

²⁰² Victor D. Cha, "Security and Democracy in South Korean Development," in *Korea's Democratization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 201–19; Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War"; Cho, "Democratic Instability"; Acharya, "Democracy or Death?"

outsized effect on how Pyongyang reacts. Similarly, China has been North Korea's closest ally, and its policies vis-à-vis the Korean peninsula are also closely watched by Pyongyang, as well as by the rest of the world. Finally, no matter how badly Seoul wants to improve relations, North Korea's leaders and its domestic political cohesion have significant implications for how much progress can be made and how close the Peninsula comes to conflict. The conservative coalition (CC) had made slow progress with the Clinton administration on an agreed framework and ban on ballistic missile proliferation, going so far as to almost usher in the first inter-Korean summit in 1994 prior to the death of Kim Il-Sung, and it nearly concluded a U.S. Korean summit between Kim Jong-Il and President Bill Clinton in 2000, but disputed election results required a cancellation. Similarly, the death of Kim Jong-Il may be said to have created similar patterns of instability that resulted in the sinking of the ROK's Cheonan and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. Seoul's interests in the peaceful resolution of inter-Korean relations have continued to converge with those of Beijing since the early 1990s and continue to share a great degree of similarity even today.²⁰³ Both countries have an interest in constraining North Korea from taking destabilizing actions, each agrees on the denuclearization of the peninsula, and, unlike America, both agree that keeping North Korea from going to pieces is more important than immediate and unconditional denuclearization.²⁰⁴ The more China attempts to cajole Pyongyang into cooperation through the six-party talks or other frameworks, the less cooperation the Kim regime appears to offer.²⁰⁵ The South has victoriously turned Pyongyang's staunchest ally at least neutral, and in some cases, more aligned with Seoul today.

The United States acted as security guarantor to the South during the past 60-plus years, but it also has presented an existential threat to the regime in Pyongyang. More so than South Korea, the policy positions of Washington drive the Kim regime to act in ways viewed as irrational to outside observers. The harsh reaction of the DPRK to

²⁰³ Kim, "The Changing Role of China on the Korean Peninsula," 91.

²⁰⁴ Kim, "The Changing Role of China on the Korean Peninsula," 105.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 91.

annual military exercises is a prominent example. The reversal of policy positions and rhetoric from Bill Clinton to George W. Bush could not have been starker when it came to North Korea. KDJ and Clinton were simultaneously implementing the Sunshine Policy and the agreed framework. Warming of relations was at a high point in June 2000 when KDJ became the first President of South Korea to meet Kim Jong-Il in the North. Bush's "axis of evil" comments increased the suspicions of North Korea, but also infuriated the South. RMH thought he was making real progress with the North in Bush's first term, but the increased hostility drove a wedge between the North and South dialogue that only America could remove, which, in turn, decreased the strength of working relations between the United States and South Korea. LMB mended U.S.-ROK bilateral relations, but he almost completely shut the door to North Korea as a consequence. Not only did the North walk back from areas of cooperation, but its stunning reversal in policies may have prompted significant shows of DPRK military might, including the sinking of the Cheonan and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island. PGH has taken a middle road between "dichotomous appeasement and hardline pressure."²⁰⁶ It is important to note that increased tension along the Korean border has characterized most of her presidency thus far; however, less actual carnage has been involved than under LMB. In short, many inter-Korean relations breakthroughs that occurred under KDJ and RMH have evaporated under today's CC presidents. KDJ and RMH made a difference, both in positive and negative ways; however, many of those changes were temporary. Instability within U.S.-ROK relations seems to have led to a new equilibrium that may not be as amenable to American interests, but is more stable and based upon democratic fundamentals that appear less likely to be altered.

The domestic politics of divided government also significantly constrained the Kim and Roh administrations. KDJ's Vice President and Minister of Unification were blocked in the South Korean legislature. Holding up Kim Jong-Pil and economic reforms did not directly affect KDJ's Sunshine Policy, but it was part of the reason that the MDP lost seats in the 2000 general election and yielded a split government for an entire

²⁰⁶ Moon and Boo, "Korean Foreign Policy," 223.

administration. Either way, this drawback would only characterize the first election of the LC, unless the party failed to institutionalize the experience. Finally, KDJ faced a split government. RMH's government was split for the first and last years. While South Korean presidents have more power compared to America's or Japan's leaders, they still require (at least) a majority to vote in favor of reforms in the National Assembly to pass legislation.²⁰⁷ The ruling coalition attempted to obstruct implementation of the Sunshine Policy in 2000 by arranging a vote of no confidence on the Unification minister.²⁰⁸

Also, personal politics and regionalism fail to result in lasting social cleavages. If solid party power were consolidated, and if the public endorsed KDJ's policies on North Korea, RMH would not have to sidestep the issue of policy differences. When RMH was asked whether he would change the Sunshine Policy, he stated:

I don't think there is a particular reason for my policy to be different from the former President's policy. I will try to improve the methodology by consulting with the opposition party and winning more approval of the people and increasing transparency of the process.²⁰⁹

The height of legislative obstruction to the opposition coalition's attempt to govern came during the 2004 impeachment trial of RMH. Although RMH was eventually cleared by the Supreme Court, this action would foreshadow his difficulties with domestic political friction. As a result of failing to manage a coalition, KDJ failed to accomplish most of his ambitious agenda and RMH was impeached. Domestic politics played a significant role in constraining Korean presidents, but it is not the whole story.

Policy-wise, KDJ was instrumental in defining a social cleavage for inter-Korean relations, although it did not persist with any force. His Sunshine Policy got out ahead of the Korean population in a manner that reinforced political trends within South Korea.

²⁰⁷ Jongryn Mo, "Political Culture and Legislative Gridlock: Politics of Economic Reform in Precrisis Korea," *Comparative Political Studies* 34, no. 5 (2001): 467–92, doi:10.1177/0010414001034005001.

²⁰⁸ Whan Kihl Young, "The Past as a Prologue: President Kim Dae Jung's Legacy and President Roh Moo-Hyun's Policy Issues and Future Challenges," in *A Turning Point: Democratic Consolidation in the ROK and Strategic Readjustment in the US-ROK Alliance*, ed. Alexandre Y. Mansourov (Honolulu, HI: Asia Pacific Center For Security Studies, 2005), 6.

²⁰⁹ Jongryn Mo, "What Does Korea Want?," *Policy Review* 142 (2007): 43–55.

Furthermore, it resonated with a democratic movement that saw it as a logical corollary to the movement that freed the south from the subjugation of the Chun Doo-hwan administration. The idea of North Korea as a part of one Korea is a popular sentiment, especially since many families are still separated by the DMZ. An ethnic sentiment corresponding with Minjok nationalism, as a fundamentally distinct race of people, underpins the idea of eventual unification.²¹⁰ KDJ was able to mobilize people toward a fundamental change in policy, resulting in the first inter-Korean summit with Kim Jong-Il in 2000; and as a result, family reunions started again in Mount Kumgang for the first time since 1985.²¹¹ After two historic summits, progress stopped, but not because South Koreans wished for it to stop; domestic politics changed. LMB was elected to replace RMH as president and his North Korea policies were again marked by hardline political calculations.²¹² It was during his term that the ROK's Cheonan was sunk and Yeonpyeong Island was shelled.²¹³ The transition affected not only inter-Korean relations, but also South Koreans' views of North Korea. By demonizing the North, President Lee could paint both KDJ and RMH as dangerous regarding national security and allow fear of the attacks to take hold and erase any progress that had been made. The politics of fear is not unique to South Korea's democracy. America fears an ambiguous terrorist threat. China fears strategic encirclement and "splittism," and Taiwan fears that the People's Liberation Army will cross the Taiwan Straits in force. However, in Korea, fearmongering with the North easily becomes a self-licking ice cream cone as the CC can show LC weakness by antagonizing the North and appear to provide the tough policies needed to protect the South while bolstering its poll numbers. Overall, progress was made between North Korea and South Korea, but that progress is susceptible to fear and domestic policies, as well as to extra-regional, sabre rattling that can nullify any real

²¹⁰ Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea*, 185.

²¹¹ Sang-hun Choe, "Amid Hugs and Tears, Korean Families Divided by War Reunite," *The New York Times*, February 21, 2014, <http://web.archive.org/web/20140221091325/http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/21/world/asia/north-and-south-koreans-meet-in-emotional-family-reunions.html>.

²¹² Chung-in Moon, "South Korea in 2008: From Crisis to Crisis," *Asian Survey* 49, no. 1 (2009): 120–28, doi:AS.2009.49.1.120.

²¹³ "North Korea Profile—Timeline," January 14, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15278612>.

success. KDJ's Sunshine Policy achieved some degree of success at mending inter-Korean relations. He clearly championed the cause as a candidate and democratized inter-Korean relations and other security issues, and his foreign policy achieved marked success in the initial years of the agreement. Some have criticized the policy as wrongheaded, or even a setback the coercive levers that might bring Kim Jong-Il to the bargaining table.²¹⁴ Kim Il-Sung, his son, and grandson seem to respond negatively to threats and positively toward engagement policies. KDJ's policies addressed that, but did not build the international coalition behind his policies necessary to usher in new relations with the North.

Roh also had an impact on furthering engagement policy toward North Korea. For domestic political reasons, he could not claim to be doubling down on the Sunshine Policy; but for all intents and purposes, this seemed to be his plan. In this manner, both Roh and Kim had a positive, stabilizing effect on inter-Korean relations. However, whatever gains were made were constrained by U.S. policy shifts, domestic political machinations, and political stability within North Korea. As the North has continued its usual routine of aggression and cooperation, inter-Korean relations under PGH are essentially back to what they were prior to LC attempts to change the status quo.

4. Japan

Although South Korea seems fixated on Japan's potential to take the islands by force, it is unclear that Japan has shown the capability or intent to take back the islands by force. To the contrary, Japan has tried to resolve the dispute diplomatically by attempting to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice on three separate occasions.²¹⁵

The LC's policy ambitions for Japan also ran into unexpected roadblocks. First, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's administration drew some amount of popular support from overtly nationalistic shows of support at the Yasukuni Shrine and the first few

²¹⁴ Levin and Han, *Sunshine in Korea*, 131–39.

²¹⁵ Miller, "ICJ and Dokdo/Takeshima"; "Japanese Territory: Takeshima," Government, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, (July 30, 2015), http://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/takeshima/page1we_000061.html.

annual disputes over history textbooks. KDJ worked with Koizumi while remaining critical of specific events. Although the United States continued to push for a trilateral strategic partnership, these plans did not go far. Depending on how the geostrategic relationship is viewed, Japan could be one of Korea's greatest allies or one of Korea's largest threats. With China's military modernization and North Korea's continued intransigence, South Korea sees its greatest chances to hedge between China and America. At first, this does not seem to impact Japan and Korea's relations; but as Japan's economy slows, and its conservative politicians increasingly turn to the past to invoke a sense of nationalism, its neighbors have united in anger and outrage that has brought China and South Korea much closer on their Japan policy than before.

Korea's nationalism and identity politics have been equated to the tail that wags the dog.²¹⁶ Appealing to nationalism has been a tried and true method of engendering popular support among democracies, albeit with foreign policy implications. By using fiery rhetoric in Korea with regards to Japan's domestic actions, RMH incited negative nationalism as a way to push back against Japan while attempting to raise his popularity. As the two sides traded diplomatic messages regarding the Dokdo Islands, RMH made statements that appeared to cause a regression in diplomacy, for example, that "true reconciliation with Korea can come only after apology and reparation, which is predicated on the finding of truth."²¹⁷ Moon and Li paint the nationalistic reactions of RMH as rational given the nationalistic trends that occurred in Japan under Koizumi's government.²¹⁸ However, unlike Roh's reactions, the only action that Koizumi actually conducted was visiting the Yasukuni shrine, and while this may be inappropriate for good international relationship management purposes, it is hard to see how a purely ceremonial action can be viewed as worthy of "diplomatic war of nationalism."²¹⁹ Midford takes another view of the fateful interaction, describing it not only as a diplomatic war, but also

²¹⁶ Chung-in Moon and Chun-fu Li, "Nationalism in South Korea: Domestic Discourse and Impacts on Relations with Neighboring Countries," Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, March 26, 2008.

²¹⁷ Moon and Li, "Nationalism in South Korea," 22.

²¹⁸ Moon and Li, "Nationalism in South Korea," 26–7.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

as a near miss from actual conflict.²²⁰ A little over a year after the 2005 dispute over the Dokdo/Takeshima Islands and historical textbooks, South Korea and Japan were involved in a militarized interstate dispute near the disputed islands in which Prime Minister Koizumi may have averted a conflict by recalling his maritime survey ships at the last moment.²²¹ This action appears to have been destabilizing, but the nature of the instability seems to be more persistent than seen with the gains of the Sunshine Policy. LMB became the first Korean President to visit the Dokdo Islands, poking a thumb in Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko's eye before leaving office. Interestingly, Prime Minister Noda was part of the progressive DPJ that was anti-Yasukuni and pro-engagement with Korea, and other East Asian neighbors. LMB was being driven more by domestic political rhetoric, a rhetoric that RMH had fervently whipped up by castigating and publicly denouncing Japan.²²² Another example is the domestic political backlash LMB received when Korea and Japan signed a military information-sharing agreement in 2012.²²³

KDJ worked successfully with Prime Minister Koizumi to cohost the World Cup and attempted to deal head on with the history textbook issues and visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.²²⁴ While KDJ tried to work through differences, his progress was marred by an increasingly vociferous RMH, who used anti-Japanese and anti-American rhetoric to win election. Under RMH, political criticism took on a life of its own as Korean nationalism started to fuel the need for politicians to act in an increasingly brash manner toward Tokyo. During the dispute over undersea surveying in 2006, RMH brought the two countries to the edge of open conflict near the disputed Dokdo Islands.²²⁵ Whether or not

²²⁰ Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance," 90–92.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Sang-Hun Choe, "South Korea to Sign Military Pact with Japan," *New York Times*, June 28, 2012, sec. Asia Pacific, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/29/world/asia/south-korea-to-sign-historic-military-pact-with-japan.html?_r=0.

²²⁴ "Opening Statements by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President Kim Dae Jung of the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Conference" (press conference, Seoul, Republic of Korea, March 22, 2002), <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/korea/pmv0203/state.html>.

²²⁵ Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance," 80–83.

this was his intention, domestic rhetoric continued to fuel aggressiveness in Korean foreign policy even after he left office. LMB came into office wanting to repair the relationship with Japan, but he ended his term by becoming the first president to visit the disputed Dokdo Islands. Economic interdependence suffered between the two countries, as RMH allowed a currency swap agreement to expire, and, in 2004, talks halted on the Korea-Japan FTA.

It seems that policies can matter in Korea, but the real influence that any politician has over relations between Japan and South Korea has to do with the rhetoric they use and the confidence building that goes into ensuring that each domestic populace deescalates from the destructive negative nationalism feedback loops. PGH has attempted to rein in domestic hatred of Japan by moving slowly to build relations back to a workable level. Relations are still not as warm as they were under KDJ and Koizumi, but part of that fact has to do with Japan's Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo. It is a mark of progress that Abe not only upheld the *Kono* statement and set a conciliatory tone during his speech upon the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of WWII, but also that his administration appears to be making history by attempting to settle the "comfort women" controversy.

Overall, then, South Korean presidents do matter in their relations with Japan, but are significantly constrained by domestic political concerns and Japanese political actions. Most notably, KDJ and PGH have successfully improved relations between the South and Japan, whereas RMH and LMB fueled the flames of nationalism for domestic political gains. The greatest and most enduring effect that a president has on bilateral relations is how that president goes about dealing with political controversies. While PGH used a cold shoulder to isolate Japan, RMH actively berated Japan for its "tendency to invade."²²⁶

²²⁶ Midford, "Historic Memory vs. Democratic Reassurance," 84.

C. CONCLUSION

Political consolidation is a natural part of the democratization process. KDJ took an even-keeled approach to improving relations with China, revolutionizing inter-Korean relations, and working cautiously with Japan through a partnership on the 2002 World Cup while talking through thorny history issues. While relations with America were strained under KDJ, this was due less to Korea's drastic policies than to political changes that occurred in the transition from President Clinton to President Bush. It is impossible to ascertain whether similar issues would occur under a CC. It seems that the real lesson is that when two democratic countries deal with security issues, two democratic changes of power can yield distance between the alignments of the countries' interests. While KDJ's policies seemed to complement those of President Clinton, this was not immediately the case with President Bush.

To build upon disapproval over the apparent gap between America's and South Korea's approach to North Korea, RMH used North Korea policy and base issues to build an anti-American platform to run for the presidency. Once elected, he quickly had to moderate his views, but this change did not instantaneously remove the negative sentiment that RMH stirred in the Korean population. It was not only anti-Americanism that Roh was peddling; his anti-Japan rhetoric took a decade to die down and has poisoned the sentiment of a generation of young Koreans. Of course, he did not do this alone. Politicians within Japan gave him much fodder with which to work. Regarding China, RMH continued the progress of accommodating China's rise while enmeshing it into the regional framework, but nationalism again reared its head with regards to Korean historical sites and artifacts that China attempted to claim as its own. No real effect resulted, but nevertheless, this case shows how a reactive president can make a mountain out of any molehill. Last, but not least, RMH's near continuation of the Sunshine Policy was successful, but did not survive beyond his presidency. It took the transition of President Obama and LMB before the DPRK perpetrated attacks on the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong Islands.

Therefore, while the KDJ and RMH administrations possessed destabilizing elements—that is, the president can matter—multiple constraints are also leveraged

against young parties, and security democratization is an event that happens only once. Many of the difficulties that occurred between Korea and the United States do not seem to be a recurring theme; however, the row with Japan could definitely play out again in future changes of power, as at least 50% of Korea's population still regards Japan with suspicion and domestic politics may benefit politicians who play into that suspicion. In the long run, economic forces and person-to-person interactions may lessen anti-Japanese rhetoric, but at the time of this writing, it is still a significant undercurrent of Korean democracy.

Democracy takes already hotly contested strategic relations within East Asia and adds another layer of complexity to. The peacefulness of democracy in East Asia is tested by the area's many social issues, which had been bottled for centuries under a cap of authoritarianism.²²⁷

The two exceptions seem to be the progress made with North Korea and the deterioration of relations with Japan. Inter-Korean relations ebb and flow, but no doubt exists that from 2000–2008, a major thaw in relations was evidenced, only to be thwarted by the election of hardliner LMB. Similarly, relations between Korea and Japan cannot be considered good prior to KDJ's election, but an attempt to reach out failed, not because of Korean policies, but because of the rise in Japanese nationalism and the negative Korean reaction to Japan's policies. RMH's efforts to cultivate negative nationalism around issues between Japan and Korea resulted in over a decade of frosty relations. PGH, the current president, waited over a year for the first meeting with her counterpart, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo. Sure enough, political changes in South Korea come from a politician's ability to steer the public narrative and invoke nationalism. Otherwise, policies and attempts to change without popular support seem severely constrained by a number of sources.

²²⁷ Benjamin E. Goldsmith, "A Liberal Peace in Asia?," *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 1 (2007): 25, doi:10.1177/0022343307072427.

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IV. FINDINGS

In the previous chapters, this thesis focused on individual countries and administrations to determine whether a new government made a difference in each case. The answer was mixed. While Hatoyama and Roh made a difference in some ways, in others they did not effect change. This chapter concludes by addressing the areas in which new administrations made a difference, those where they met constraints, and those that deserve further study.

A. WHERE DID NEW ADMINISTRATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Administrations in Japan and Korea made a difference in their efforts to democratize the security policy and achieve greater foreign policy autonomy from the United States. By democratizing security policy, Hatoyama made it conceivable for Japanese citizens to question openly Japan's continued strong alliance with the United States. That it did not change this alignment is a consequential but separate issue. KDJ moved to desecuritize the North Korean threat and to seek rapprochement with Kim Jong-il. In both cases, these policies contributed to the administration's failure, but the process was important for both procedural democracies. Achieving greater foreign policy autonomy provided citizens with a sense of sovereignty that may have been questioned before. It also allows Seoul and Tokyo to better advance their own interests even when they do not neatly align with those of Washington.

1. Democratization of Security Policy

One of the ways in which the DPJ, the MDP, and Uri party made a difference was by democratizing security policy. Democratization of the security policy was evident: KDJ set a dramatically different course for South Korea's relations toward North Korea. Not only did he provide coherent policy prescriptions that appeared to have decreased the tension on the Korean peninsula, but he also created one of South Korea's first cross-cutting political cleavages, which appeared to erode regionalism. While reason exists to suspect whether that cleavage endured, the portion of the population who approved of

engagement with North Korea and disapproved of U.S. rhetoric can be credited for RMH's election in 2003.²²⁸

The case is not so clear-cut with Japan. Clearly, the JSP and the Japan Communist Party were allowed to voice their opinions, within limits, even during the Cold War. Neither party ever held enough seats in the Diet or enough senior positions within the bureaucracy to influence foreign policy in a major way. Since Japan's foreign policy levers are pulled by bureaucrats, the LDP's long run of dominance provided significant institutional inertia by promoting personnel aligned with the LDP to top levels.²²⁹ For this reason, Hatoyama's distancing himself from the bureaucracy effectively allowed his administration to alter Japan's foreign policy direction. This was not proof that Japan had democratized its security policy. The Japanese people did not vote for the DPJ because of the foreign policy prescriptions Hatoyama attempted to implement, but, rather, voted for the DPJ because of a loss of confidence in the LDP's ability to fix the economy.²³⁰ During the elections that followed the Japanese people also showed their intolerance for the DPJ's ineptitude in foreign affairs. In the 2010 Upper House elections, the DPJ suffered setbacks in the Diet; and in the 2012, Lower House elections it was swiftly ushered out of power.²³¹ Abenomics may have had something to do with Japan's reelection of the once maligned ex-prime minister, but Pekkanen and Reed illustrate that foreign policy also jumped higher on voters' priority list from 2009 to 2012.²³² Clearly, the Japanese decided at least in part that what the DPJ's approach to foreign policy did not work, and they decided to give the LDP another chance.

This differs from earlier non-LDP administrations. The Hosokawa administration came to power not through a foreign policy mandate from the people, but due to voter disenchantment over the LDP's failure to improve the economy and avoid scandal. It was

²²⁸ Moon, "Korean Nationalism, Anti-Americanism and Democratic Consolidation."

²²⁹ Sneider, "The New Asianism.," 121–22.

²³⁰ Pekkanen, Reed, and Scheiner, "Japanese Politics between the 2009 and 2012 Elections," 9.

²³¹ Masahisa Endo, Robert Pekkanen, and Steven R. Reed, "The LDP's Path Back to Power," in *Japan Decides 2012* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 49.

²³² Pekkanen, Reed, and Scheiner, "Japanese Politics between the 2009 and 2012 Elections," 13.

also an exercise in political maneuvering, since Hosokawa came to power by cobbling together a tenuous coalition that was only united by opposition to the LDP. Since Hosokawa's significant accomplishment was restructuring the political system, and since his coalition fell apart through political maneuvering and not voting, this does not represent an example of voters' actively voting to shape foreign policy outcomes.

Similarly, the Murayama administration did not provide an example of voters' making a stand on foreign policy grounds. Murayama came to power through a political deal between the LDP and the JSP, not in a general election. The LDP coopted the JSP by promising to install Murayama as a coalition prime minister. Murayama's administration did strike a new chord with Japan's neighbors. It was not his foreign policy that doomed his party, but rather misfortune and politics. The Kobe earthquake and the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack were both domestic emergencies that the Murayama government botched. Also, because the JSP was a party that opposed the JSDF, photos of Murayama on a JMSDF ship became politically damaging for the party.²³³ Thus it was not so much that the voters wanted to change Murayama's foreign policies as it was that the minority of JSP voters within Japan felt abandoned by the leader of their party, while the LDP became strong enough to no longer need the JSP as coalition partners.

There is reason to be skeptical of this claim. The March 11 disaster happened a little over a year before the election for which the DPJ was thrown out of power, and like the sarin gas attack, involved a domestic emergency. The nuclear disaster and tsunami were significant events that weighed on people's minds, but it was the multitude of missteps regarding security and foreign policy that, in total, became the impetus to throw the DPJ from power in 2012. One might also argue that in the minds of Japanese voters, the administration's reaction to the nuclear disaster and tsunami could be put under a broad "crisis management" category that could also include Japan's security policy concerns.

²³³ Samuels, *Securing Japan*, 118–9.

2. Greater Foreign Policy Autonomy

Each change of the party in power involved an increase in the state's control over its own foreign policy. Both Japan and South Korea have relied on American bases and troops to maintain their security since WWII. Both countries' new governments came to power and opposed the United States in one form or another. While initially destabilizing, both were transient. Now Japan and South Korea have more leverage in foreign policy prescriptions and are in a stronger position to choose policies that do not always align with Washington's.

In Japan, Hatoyama attempted to change the status quo with regard to two aspects of U.S.-Japan relations: the Futenma relocation and Indian Ocean refueling mission. Hatoyama's cessation of the Indian Ocean refueling mission came amid numerous requests from foreign countries to continue providing support. Although he was successful in decreasing the already-meager support for the international coalition in Afghanistan, this act alone did not affect regional stability. He failed to relocate Futenma outside of Okinawa, but the lingering effects of his attempt still plague domestic politics within Japan today.²³⁴ Hatoyama's attempt to change Japan's strategic outlook to a more Westward-focused policy startled America and led to concerns about whether Japan's actions reflected a shift in regional dynamics.

Similarly, South Korea saw major changes in its policy positions vis-à-vis the United States pertaining to North Korea and general public sentiment toward U.S. bases. KDJ's policy toward North Korea did not greatly diverge from the Clinton administration's stance, but, when compared to the George W. Bush administration's views, Kim's policies seemed to put South Korea in opposition to America's foreign policy prescriptions, something not often expected before. With base relocation issues and blame directed toward the U.S. Army for the death of two schoolgirls, RMH's anti-

²³⁴ It is still too early to know what will happen to Futenma's relocation to Henoko, but Prime Minister Abe has successfully fought off court battles and protests, and continues to make slow progress on building the new facilities in Henoko on the northern shores of Okinawa, Japan. Eric Johnston, "New Calls for Reopening Talks on U.S. Okinawa Base Closure Emerge after Ginowan Elects New Mayor," *Japan Times*, February 3, 2016, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/02/03/national/politics-diplomacy/new-calls-reopening-talks-u-s-okinawa-base-closure-emerge-ginowan-elects-new-mayor/#.VsewPJX2bIU>.

American sentiment became popular within South Korea around 2003. It appears that the base issue may have been less persistent than overall anger at the United States. In 2009, LMB received pushback from the Korean people over concerns about the safety of U.S. beef. These developments all point to the Korean people's preference for Seoul to represent their wishes irrespective of Washington's policy preferences.

These similar cases show commonality between two U.S. allies that appear dissatisfied with playing follow-the-leader on foreign policy. While the preceding chapters identified a short-term increase in instability due to the democratization of each country's security policies, both Tokyo and Seoul share many interests with Washington and continue to work with the United States on a wide range of issues without having to capitulate on areas over which they do not agree. South Korea's refusal to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership does not mean that it intends to make the United States withdraw all American forces from the peninsula. It is in Seoul's best interest to keep U.S. forces on the peninsula, at least in the near term, as a strategic deterrent. Similarly, Japan's bilateral relations with Vietnam and the Philippines do not detract from its support for basing or for working bilaterally with U.S. forces, and may even be mutually beneficial for both countries.

B. WHY WERE NEW ADMINISTRATIONS CONSTRAINED?

The new administrations were constrained in accomplishing their agendas for multiple reasons. The main constraints were those that resulted from inexperience in governing and a general lack of information, as well as those that resulted from the divergence between the objectives set forth by politicians and the preferences of domestic and international actors. The best example of inexperience and lack of information is Prime Minister Hatoyama's misguided attempt to change the MCAS Futenma relocation agreement with the United States. President KDJ's Sunshine Policy implementation is the best of several examples of divergent interests.

1. Inexperience and Lack of Information

New administrations lack governing experience, and, for the most part, their personnel have not been active in positions where policy experience could be gained prior to ascending to the executive branch. Since the LDP in Japan promoted its own interests in the bureaucracy for over 50 years, the DPJ felt that bureaucrats were unreliable in its administration's plans to change foreign policy postures.

Disregard for a major arm of the executive branch was detrimental to the DPJ in multiple ways. First, Hatoyama committed to revising the Futenma relocation plan after it had taken ten years to come to an initial agreement with a majority of stakeholders. His populist message resonated with the opposition groups in Okinawa in ways that continue to plague the central government today. However, Hatoyama had no reason to believe a better deal was to be had. His naiveté, coupled with an overly optimistic foreign policy prescription set on redefining relations with China and Korea, caused Hatoyama to take a leap of faith.

Secondly, bureaucrats—and even DPJ politicians in the MOD—were signaling that Hatoyama's idea was ill-advised, but he proceeded to marginalize the MOD and push for his version of Futenma realignment despite the difficulties it would present for the U.S.-Japan alliance. As a part of the executive branch, Hatoyama should have been able to enact new policies through official channels, but instead of building consensus and obtaining the full picture he chose to sideline ministry officials who disagreed with him. His approach to dealing with the bureaucracy allowed for much more change, but it also resulted in a significant portion of the regional instability that this thesis has identified. Similarly, Hatoyama did not understand dynamics between Japan and China well enough to bring rapprochement, and consequently, required the DPJ reluctantly to increase ties with Washington again.²³⁵

²³⁵ Hughes, "The Democratic Party of Japan's New (but Failing) Grand Security Strategy," 138.

2. Divergence of Domestic and International Objectives and Preferences

Both Japan and Korea ran into policy constraints in the form of international actors that held greatly different interests. Japan's notion of moving Futenma outside of Okinawa was opposed by the United States, but the DPJ also received pushback within Japan from multiple directions. The U.S. Secretary of Defense started to cancel high-level meetings and refused to negotiate any option other than moving MCAS Futenma to Henoko. President Obama quickly became cold with Tokyo after Hatoyama sent messages that sought to distance Tokyo from Washington while representing the interests of Okinawa more directly. Constraints in Japan were not simply a fluke.

In Korea, KDJ attempted to change inter-Korean relations through the implementation of the Sunshine Policy. His efforts were obstructed in the National Assembly and derailed by President George W. Bush's hardline approach toward Pyongyang. The conservative opposition party obstructed the implementation of the Sunshine Policy by refusing to confirm Kim's unification minister. This obstruction was only further complicated when President George W. Bush made his speech labeling North Korea part of the "axis of evil." Significant disagreements between Washington and Seoul became evident and that rift became fodder for domestic politics. Efforts to derail the Sunshine Policy were not wholly successful, but in the end, policies toward the North hardened under LMB and PGH. Nearly all progress made under the Sunshine Policy, including the Kaesong industrial complex, has been undermined by actors on all sides. Upon implementation of President Lee's tougher foreign policy prescriptions, the North started its belligerent behavior, including the bombing of Yeonpyeong Island and the sinking the ROK's Cheonan. Nuclear and missile tests have continued to escalate since President Park came into office. Last year's box landmine incident along the DMZ resulted in a change in shells, and eventually, the shuttering of the Kaesong Industrial Complex.²³⁶

²³⁶ Moon and Boo, "Korean Foreign Policy," 235–38.

C. FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY

During the research for this thesis, two other areas of study stood out. Taiwan appeared as a prominent case study, albeit with some caveats, that could be studied for its own sake. Also, research into democratic consolidation appears to overlap and attempts to explain some of the phenomena that this thesis noted in previous chapters. While beyond the scope of this study, both areas provide room for further enrichment into the dynamics of political party change and its effects on regional stability.

1. Taiwan as a Promising Case Study

Although Taiwan was not presented in depth within this study, the eight-year, two-term, DPP administration of Chen Shui-bian illustrates some of the same trends outlined in this paper. Chen's popular support stemmed from the independence movement, which consequently made him unpopular with the PRC. During the Chen administration, cross-Straits relations (CSR) fell to their lowest point in decades. "Washington and Beijing began to 'co-manage' Taiwan."²³⁷ Eventually, the PRC passed an Anti-Secession Law, which states that any attempt to declare independence would result in the PRC's opposition by all means necessary, including force.²³⁸ CSR have cooled under his successor Ma Ying-jeou, but his alignment with Beijing cost his party in the polls.²³⁹

Taiwan, which is isolated from many international organizations and treaty alliances because of its peculiar status vis-à-vis China, is considered by the PRC to be a domestic issue, but Taiwan still appears to have ambiguous assurances under the Taiwan Relations Act that the Taiwan issue will be settled peacefully. Shelley Rigger notes that "Chen undertook a series of initiatives aimed at raising Taiwan's international status: promoting a new constitution, pressing for referendums on issues related to Taiwan's

²³⁷ Rigger, "Taiwan in U.S.-China Relations," 302.

²³⁸ Ibid., 301.

²³⁹ Alan D. Romberg, "Cross-Straits Relations: Portrayals of Consistency: Calm on the Surface, Paddling Like Hell Underneath," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 45 (October 21, 2014): 1–26.

sovereignty, filing an application for United Nations membership for ‘Taiwan.’”²⁴⁰ It is clear that Chen’s administration attempted unilaterally to change its international profile in an attempt to acquire more of the trappings of other independent countries. But divided government proved to be a problem for Chen Shui-bian. As Shelly Rigger notes, “For seven years, the KMT-dominated Legislative Yuan refused to appropriate funds to purchase most of what the United States was willing to sell.”²⁴¹ It had the effect of further deteriorating the U.S.-Taiwan relationship. Yet deteriorating relations may not be as clear-cut as cause and effect of Chen’s actions. Although Chen pushed for referenda and other measures that attempted unilaterally to change the status quo to provide Taiwan more international recognition, his initial tone toward China was not nearly as radical. The new party leader, Tsai Ing-wen, has also moderated the DPP’s stance on independence. Independence is still a contentious part of the party plank, but it has not been a part of her political message.²⁴² Perhaps certain other pressures, such as domestic PRC concerns and relative balance of power change between China and America, also factor into interactions amongst the United States, China, and Taiwan from 2000–2008.

Taiwan’s DPP, as it heads to its second presidency, seems to provide an important caveat. Although newly elected DPP President Tsai has successfully moderated her party’s views, the PRC views the DPP as hostile to PRC interests regardless of its stated position. Taiwan’s ambiguous state/sub-state position, coupled with the diverging interests of the PRC and Taiwan, appear to place the two on a collision course. The underlying shift of identity within the Taiwan populace, not any specific president or administration, appears to be the driving force of this instability.

Although the Taiwanese case is similar to those of Japan and South Korea, it is important to study on its own. While it is beyond the scope of this paper, future studies could better compare or study Taiwan’s constraints on administration effectiveness for its own sake.

²⁴⁰ Rigger, “Taiwan in U.S.-China Relations,” 301.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 302.

²⁴² “DPP Selects Tsai.”

2. Democratic Consolidation?

Another area that has been further studied, but that lies mainly beyond the scope of this paper, is whether incomplete democratic consolidation is the mechanism to blame for instability among Asia's nascent democracies. Cho argues, "A combustible mix of national identity politics and incomplete democratic consolidation creates fertile ground for belligerent foreign policy behavior in East Asia, along the way jeopardizing regional stability."²⁴³ However, is this the case? To make this argument, Cho defines democratic consolidation as "when democracy becomes 'the only game in town,'"²⁴⁴ but, as Andreas Schedler explains, "for all its thinness and simplicity, [the concept of democratic consolidation] poses considerable problems of operationalization and measurement."²⁴⁵

The reason that this paper does not focus squarely on the angle of democratic consolidation as the key factor is that consolidation, depending on how it is defined, appears to be almost aspirational, something that all democracies strive to approach but do not achieve for any length of time. Cho elaborates that East Asian democracies fail in two aspects of consolidation, ineffective party systems and personality-based electoral politics.²⁴⁶ The problem with this pronouncement is that Japan has effectively used its single-party dominant system to accommodate major changes in Japan, and when the LDP appeared to falter, another political party achieved political salience. The party system in Japan has worked to make the elite responsive to its constituents without more than one viable party since the 1950s.

Similarly, the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan has greatly institutionalized its party to the extent that its party leader, Tsai Ing-wen, just won the presidency. Its opposition, the KMT, has had a strong Leninist-style party system since it migrated over from the mainland in 1949. It is not clear how these party systems can be deemed ineffective. Perhaps, a better case could be made for the ROK, but its shifting

²⁴³ Cho, "Democratic Instability," 208.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 194.

²⁴⁵ Andreas Schedler, "Measuring Democratic Consolidation," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36, no. 1 (2001): 66.

²⁴⁶ Cho, "Democratic Instability," 195.

party system still offers a solid choice between the Grand National/Saenuri Party and the offshoot of the Millennium Democratic/Minjoo Party. If the criticism is the lack of policy choices offered by the candidates, perhaps it relates more to how politics resonates with voters in East Asia. Why do personality-based politics matter more in these countries than in other established democracies?

Personality-based politics provides the other reason that East Asian states are considered not consolidated. Populism greatly affects the political battles in East Asia, but it is not clear how it is different from established democracies elsewhere in the world. Clearly, populist presidents like Koizumi Jun'ichiro, RMH, and Chen Shui-bian all left a legacy of increased nationalism, and potentially, contributed to regional instability. The author would argue that populism is by and large on the rise worldwide. Silvio Berlusconi of Italy was a populist prime minister who served the longest since WWII. His populist appeal does not somehow degrade Italy's record of post-war democracy. Instead, populism is just a phenomenon that affects democracies that become dissatisfied with other choices. It could be that major party realignment is needed to fit the changing electorate or it could be that expectations in economic performance are not being met. In the latter case, very few real solutions may exist for a country to choose from, but the electorate may still want to show dissatisfaction by voting for an outsider or populist firebrand who promises economic windfalls or to hold the ubiquitous corrupt politicians accountable. There is nothing culturally unique about voter disenfranchisement with established political parties, nor is there anything regionally distinct about political parties in Japan and Korea stoking fears or promising unrealistic incentives to win an election. Look no further that the United States' 2016 presidential primaries, where both parties have strong populist candidates vying for the party's candidacy, and real estate mogul Donald Trump has threatened to run a third party ticket if necessary.

* * *

In conclusion, new administrations did have a fleeting effect on regional stability. Constraints, both domestically and from other regional actors restricted each new administration's ability to deviate too far from the status quo. Both Japan and South Korea gained greater foreign policy autonomy and helped to democratize security policy for each country. Finally, this study cannot corroborate a link between instability and incomplete consolidation, as democratic consolidation appears to be more of an aspirational goal for states than an actual obtainable end state. Even those countries that meet the definition of full democratic consolidation are not safe from slipping back into populist politics during time of national uncertainty.

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